

Cyclone Giri: **Two Years On**

**Voices from the Arakan State
of Western Burma (Myanmar)**



**A report by
Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO)**

December 2012

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Contact:
info@arakanhrdo.org
Tel. / Fax : + 66 (0) 55 030 249
Mobile: + 66 (0) 816 736 326
P.O Box-113, Mae Sot, Tak-63110, Thailand

[PART I]

FOREWORDS

In October of 2010, Cyclone Giri struck Arakan State on the west coast of Burma. As with Cyclone Nargis the military junta's response to the disaster was characterised by a lack of regard for its own citizens. Limited and misleading warnings of the approaching storm were issued, aid workers were denied immediate access to the worst hit areas and a proportion of the aid provided was misappropriated and sold for profit on the black market. While the victims of the cyclone struggled to stay alive and support their families, the generals were focusing solely on preparing and campaigning for the general election held 16 days after Giri struck.

This report, *Cyclone Giri: Two Years On*, by Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO) aims to give a voice to the survivors. It is the first independent assessment of the disaster response which documents the uncensored voices of the survivors. In numerous interviews they detail the systematic obstruction of relief aid, willful acts of theft, and the sale of relief supplies. Most significantly, the survivors faced intimidation and the threat of withdrawal of aid supplies if they failed to vote for the government's Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) in the general election.

Other reports have detailed the statistics of the relief effort and some local media have endeavoured to comment on the human rights abuses. Unlike Cyclone Nargis, the international media have largely ignored Cyclone Giri. This report is the first to provide accurate information on the full impact of the cyclone, as provided by local independent relief workers and survivors in Arakan. The people of Burma, especially the people of Arakan State, are entitled to truth, transparency, accountability and respect for their human rights. The crimes against the people of Burma must stop, and those who have committed them must be held accountable. *Cyclone Giri: Two Years On* is a critical step toward that accountability. The people of Burma deserve no less.



Dr Cynthia Maung
Coordinator, Emergency Assistance and Relief Team (EART)
Founder Mae Tao Clinic, Mae Sot, Thailand

On 22 October 2010, Cyclone Giri lashed Arakan State on the west coast of Burma with wind speeds of up to 120-160 mph (193-257 km/h) according to NASA, causing approximately 300 deaths and widespread damage to homes, paddy farms, fishing equipment and infrastructure.

The military regime allowed international NGOs and relief agencies only limited access to the most affected areas preventing immediate relief from reaching the already vulnerable people of Arakan State, causing increased suffering. Worse still, the State backed *Union Solidarity and Development Party* (USDP) exploited and intimidated the Cyclone Giri affected communities during the 2010 general election that was held just 16 days after the cyclone. They provided relief supplies in return for votes and withdrew relief supplies from those who did not vote for the USDP. Consequently, a large number of survivors continue to face hardships in rebuilding their homes and livelihoods even two years after the cyclone.

Cyclone Giri: Two Years On, by the *Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation* (AHRDO) is the first independent assessment of the disaster response to publish the uncensored voices of cyclone victims, local community leaders and independent relief workers in Arakan State. I hope that this report will enlighten the new Burmese government and the international community about the situation in Arakan State two years after Cyclone Giri.



Aung Myo Min
Director
Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)

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Thirdly, our special thanks go to our Executive Director, *Aung Marm Oo*, for overseeing the writing of the report, as well as co-workers and volunteers who processed data, prepared drafts and made translations. We would like to render recognition and credit to them and have their contributions documented, but their names must be kept confidential due to security reasons. We also express our gratitude to the people whose invaluable inputs and suggestions have been an integral part of this report. Without their assistance and extensive efforts, this report would not have been possible.

Finally, we would also like to give a special mention to the members of the *Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation* (AHRDO), who were responsible for the design and layout of the final publication.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AASYC	All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress
ACF	Action Contre la Faim (Action against Hunger)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Centre
AHRDO	Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
ALD	Arakan League for Democracy
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AMCDRR	Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BBB	Build Back Better
BNI	Burma News International
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
CBO	Community Based Organisation
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DMH	Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
DPDC	District Peace and Development Council
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DVB	Democratic Voice of Burma
EAT	Emergency Assistance Team
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	(UN) Food and Agricultural Organisation
FGT	Foster-Greer-Thorbecke
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONGO	Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
GRC	Giri Relief Committee
HC	(UN) Humanitarian Co-ordinator
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IA RTE	Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (of response to Cyclone Nargis)

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IIGA	Immediate Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMD	Indian Meteorology Department
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies
IRIN	(UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks
LCD	Least Developed Country
LIB	Light Infantry Battalion
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MMT	The Myanmar Times
MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
MRTV	Myanmar Radio and Television
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders)
MT	Metric Tons
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NDPCC	National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLD	National League for Democracy
NLM	The New Light of Myanmar
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OCHA (UN)	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RC	(UN) Resident Co-ordinator
Res.	Resolution
RNDP	Rakhine Nationalities Development Party
RSMC	Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre
RSWM	Relief and Social Welfare Ministry
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
TPDC	Township Peace and Development Council
UEC	Union Election Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIC	UN Information Centre (Rangoon)
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
UTC	Co-ordinated Universal Time
VPDC	Village Peace and Development Council
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Arakanese and Burmese Spelling

Arakanese	Burmese
<i>Ann</i>	<i>Ann</i>
<i>Irrawaddy</i>	<i>Ayeyarwady</i>
<i>Kyaukphru</i>	<i>Kyaukphyu</i>
<i>Laymro</i>	<i>Lemro</i>
<i>Magway</i>	<i>Magwe</i>
<i>Manaung</i>	<i>Manaung</i>
<i>Marmbra</i>	<i>Minbya</i>
<i>Mraybon</i>	<i>Myebon</i>

Arakanese	Burmese
<i>Pauktaw</i>	<i>Pauktaw</i>
<i>Ponnagywan</i>	<i>Ponnag/kyun</i>
<i>Rambray</i>	<i>Ramree</i>
<i>Rangoon</i>	<i>Yangon</i>
<i>Rathaydaung</i>	<i>Yathaydaung</i>
<i>Roma</i>	<i>Yoma</i>
<i>Sitetway</i>	<i>Sittwe</i>
<i>Thandway</i>	<i>Thandwe</i>

Amyotha Hluttaw	Upper House	Pyidaungsu Hluttaw	Union Parliament
<i>kyaing-phut</i>	government-backed USDA	<i>Pyithu Hluttaw</i>	Lower House
<i>kyat</i>	currency unit	<i>shi-kauk</i>	household registration system
<i>louq a pay</i>	forced labour	<i>State Hluttaw</i>	<i>State Parliament</i>
<i>pyi</i>	2.13 Kg (4.69 lb)	<i>tatmadaw</i>	armed forces
		<i>Ya Ya Ka</i>	VPDC

Administrative Organisation

After the 2008 Constitution came into force in 2011, the former 7 Divisions were designated as Regions (the 7 former States remain States) - Regions and States being of equal status. The Union is constituted as follows: villages are organised as village-tract; wards are organised as town or township; village-tracts and wards or towns are organised as township; townships are organised as district; districts are organised as Region or State. Since 1983 there was no national census, but the number of inhabitants of each administrative unit is registered in the *shi-kauk*, checked by police, military, *Ya Ya Ka* and USDA. Village/Township/ District Peace and Development Councils are the administrations running the respective units.

Arakan – Rakhaing - Rakhine

Rakhaing/Rakhaings represent Arakanese person/people and *Rakhine* (State) represents *Arakan* (State). *Arracan/Arakan* is first quoted in the *Livro de Duarte Barbosa* (1516). In this report *Rakhine* and *Arakan* are used interchangeably.

Exchange Rate

Due to the vast discrepancy between the official exchange rate of the kyat and the US dollar (1 US\$ = 6.5 kyats) and the black market rate (approx. 1US\$ = 1,000 kyats at the time of Cyclone Giri), a rate of 1US\$ = 1,000 kyats has been used for monetary comparisons in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 22 October 2010, a category four cyclone name Giri, hit Arakan State and made its way along the west coast of Burma. Cyclone Giri was the worst natural disaster Burma suffered since Cyclone Nargis, and came along a little more than two years after Nargis left some 140,000 dead and impacted the lives of at least 3.4 million people. Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphe, and Marmbra townships were the worst hit by Giri, while Manaung, Rambray and Ann townships were also severely affected by winds of between 120-160 mph. The impact of Giri left at least 259 people dead, and affected approximately 1 million people by causing catastrophic damage to homes, agriculture, fisheries and infrastructure in a community that is still struggling to recover from the previous Cyclone.

Disaster struck Arakan state just 16 days before the general election of 7 November 2010. The Junta's response to cyclone Giri was characteristically marred by a failure to issue appropriate warnings, acknowledge the situation, or to even respond promptly. They prioritized the election over humanitarian needs, and interfered with and misappropriated humanitarian assistance provided by international and local NGOs. *The government instructed the UN to keep the relief operation low profile and advised that increased international engagement was uncalled for despite the fact that the damage was high.* At the international level there was no UN Flash Appeal for funding, and the Myanmar Red Cross Society told the International Federation of the Red Cross not to make an international appeal. The decisions to underplay the cyclone caused considerable funding delays, possibly leading to less funding overall. Concern and response to the Giri disaster, both inside and outside Burma, was fairly muted, certainly when compared to Nargis. Arakanese organisations did respond, but few other organisations within Burma did. And compared the widespread coverage of Nargis, Giri was largely ignored by the international media and unofficial media outlets in other states of Burma. Although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi spoke out against the response, and some appeals for the victims were launched, they were largely ignored by the media.

The people of southern Arakan State are still suffering problems with rebuilding their livelihoods. After two years the infrastructure damage caused by the Giri has still not been fully repaired. In 2011 the vulnerable population was hit again by torrential rains and flooding, which killed people and destroyed tens of thousands of acres of farm land, all of which exacerbated damage left by Giri's impact. The accumulative effect of both disasters has led to serious problems such as starvation and a general degradation of the health and education systems. As a consequence, hundreds of South Arakanese youths have been migrating, predominantly to Kachin State or Thailand, in search of job opportunities. However the jobs available are usually dangerous, the living conditions deplorable and few people take interest in their circumstances.

Presently little is mentioned about the on-going humanitarian crisis two years after the initial impact of Giri, with almost all but those directly affected, forgetting or ignoring the aftermath. Of the INGOs that arrived and assisted victims in the wake of the cyclone few are left and even fewer are able to offer assistance to the local population who are still in need of food and shelter and living in deplorable conditions since 2010. South Arakan state falls within the international communities 'food poverty' parameters, and whilst this warrants assistance the region remains ignored. This area is frequently forgotten: Between 2007-09 approx. \$350 million was spent in Burma by International NGOs, however Southern Arakan state was the only place in Burma where the total expenditure amounted to \$0.

An independent assessment of the response to Cyclone Giri has proven a considerable challenge. The evaluations given by international NGOs and UN Agencies, including the reports of *the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA), were supervised by the military junta. Those evaluations differ significantly from those provided by survivors, local relief workers, and local NGO staff. The discrepancy relates to serious issues such as the death toll, relief supply efforts and the occurrence of human rights abuses. It is from the accounts of those directly affected that have formed the

basis for our fieldwork and information documented in this report. Over two years has now passed and the problems for the Giri survivors are far from over.

Why write this report and what makes it relevant two years on after the cyclone struck?

- To catch international attention and highlight the official cyclone loss and damage figures from the government and INGOs are too conservative.
- To show that not enough support is given to the victims and that two years on the misery caused by Cyclone Giri is far from over.
- To give a voice to the aid recipients, and to offer information as a guide for future relief operations: what are their real needs?
- To document the extent of the loss and damage of the affected people and their families.
- To show the views of the community leaders and local donors.
- To record the role of the local population and relief groups in the relief effort.
- To document the human rights violations perpetrated in the course of the relief effort as a first step to hold the perpetrators accountable, and
- To counter the marginalisation of Arakan State, by informing the world of the reality on the ground, and to highlight Cyclone Giri's repercussions for the state and its people.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

"This [Giri] disaster was in danger of being forgotten, ignored and unseen by the international community."

Andrew Mitchell, UK Secretary of State for International Development¹

On 22nd October 2010 more than two hundred lives were lost and tens of thousands of homes levelled to the ground in the State of Arakan, Burma. Tens of thousands of acres of paddy farms, shrimp and fish ponds were laid waste. Thousands of fishing boats, schools, religious buildings, roads and bridges were destroyed. In the worst affected areas most of people's crops and primary food sources were wiped out. Fresh water ponds and wells became contaminated with seawater, cutting off access to drinking water for tens of thousands of people.

The force with which Cyclone² Giri³ hit western Burma⁴ was equal to that of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated the Irrawaddy Delta in May 2008. Each storm system unleashed destruction and disaster. On the Saffir-Simpson scale⁵ used to express the strength of tropical storms,⁶ both cyclones reached category 4, the second highest category, with wind speeds of 120 to 160 mph (193-257 km/h). In total, Cyclone Giri affected approximately 1 million people,⁷ but this report focuses solely on Arakan State; severe rainfall and destruction also occurred parts of Chin, Shan and Kachin States, Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions.⁸

As will be discussed in the second section, the people of Arakan State were already in a vulnerable situation due to delicate demands of subsistence-living, before Cyclone Giri made landfall. The impact of Giri only exacerbated the difficulties for the majority of the affected families. Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphru, and Marmbra townships were the worst hit townships, with Manaung, Rambray and Ann townships affected to a lesser extent.

This report will hopefully spark a debate that will lead to answers for the following questions:

- Why do a large number of survivors continue to face hardships in rebuilding their homes and livelihoods even a year following Giri?
- Were there crucial delays in disseminating emergency relief and medical care reaching the victims, as occurred during the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis?
- Were the Burmese too slow to accept foreign offers of assistance?
- Did the regime violate the Arakanese people's basic rights to food, shelter, health, or life?

- Were there incidents where aid resources were impounded with denied access for relief workers?
- Were any aid resources embezzled instead of distributed?
- What were the consequences of a three month halt to harvests⁹ and other agricultural income?
- What were the reasons for the difficulties people faced when attempting to get sufficient food, water and shelter, and level of government involvement in those causes?
- Why is there limited or no reporting on Giri, as compared with Nargis?
- Why was the failure to postpone the election, which was held 16 days after Giri struck, not a breach of the law?
- Did the Military continue campaign canvassing in the affected areas during the emergency response?

This report relies on an independent assessment of the disaster response and related to the survivors and situation on the ground. Some interviews of the village leaders and local donors have been recorded in both video and audio format so as to preserve the impact of their voices.

Arakan State: *The Great Unknown*

For the people in this forgotten corner of Burma, it is important, as amnesty International concluded, to “refocus international attention on ensuring that the needs of Myanmar’s ethnic minorities are included in any discussion of the country’s human rights situation.”¹⁰

In comparison to most other states of Burma, Arakan State is generally unknown in the international community. This report is an attempt to raise the international profile of the situation in Arakan State before, during and after Cyclone Giri.

Limited Development Aid to Arakan

There have been very few voices raised in support of Giri victims which results in limited aid due to under awareness of the situation. Similarly, it is generally unknown that Arakan is the state within Burma that is most prone to natural disasters, while the nation as a whole ranks as the 10th country in the world most vulnerable to extreme weather-related events, according to the *Climate Change Vulnerability Index*.¹¹ Compounding those facts is that while Arakan is the 2nd least developed state in the Union, after Chin State, with many of the worst development indicators of all the 14 states/regions¹², there is a great lack of development assistance directed towards Arakan State.

Figures for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) and INGOs working in Least Developed Countries (LDC) indicate a large disparity between recipients on opposite ends of the aid spectrum. Afghanistan receives the highest ODA per capita in Asia, at \$186, while Burma is one of the lowest worldwide, at \$7, with the average being \$47 per capita.

Of \$350m spent between 2007-2009 INGO expenditure South Arakan State was the *only place in Burma* to receive \$0 per capita (see **Table 1.1**). The sudden increase in 2010 spending was also present in the aftermath of Nargis in 2009 where per capita spending in Irrawaddy Delta jumped to a little over \$100, while in the remainder of Burma held at \$2.50 per capita.¹³

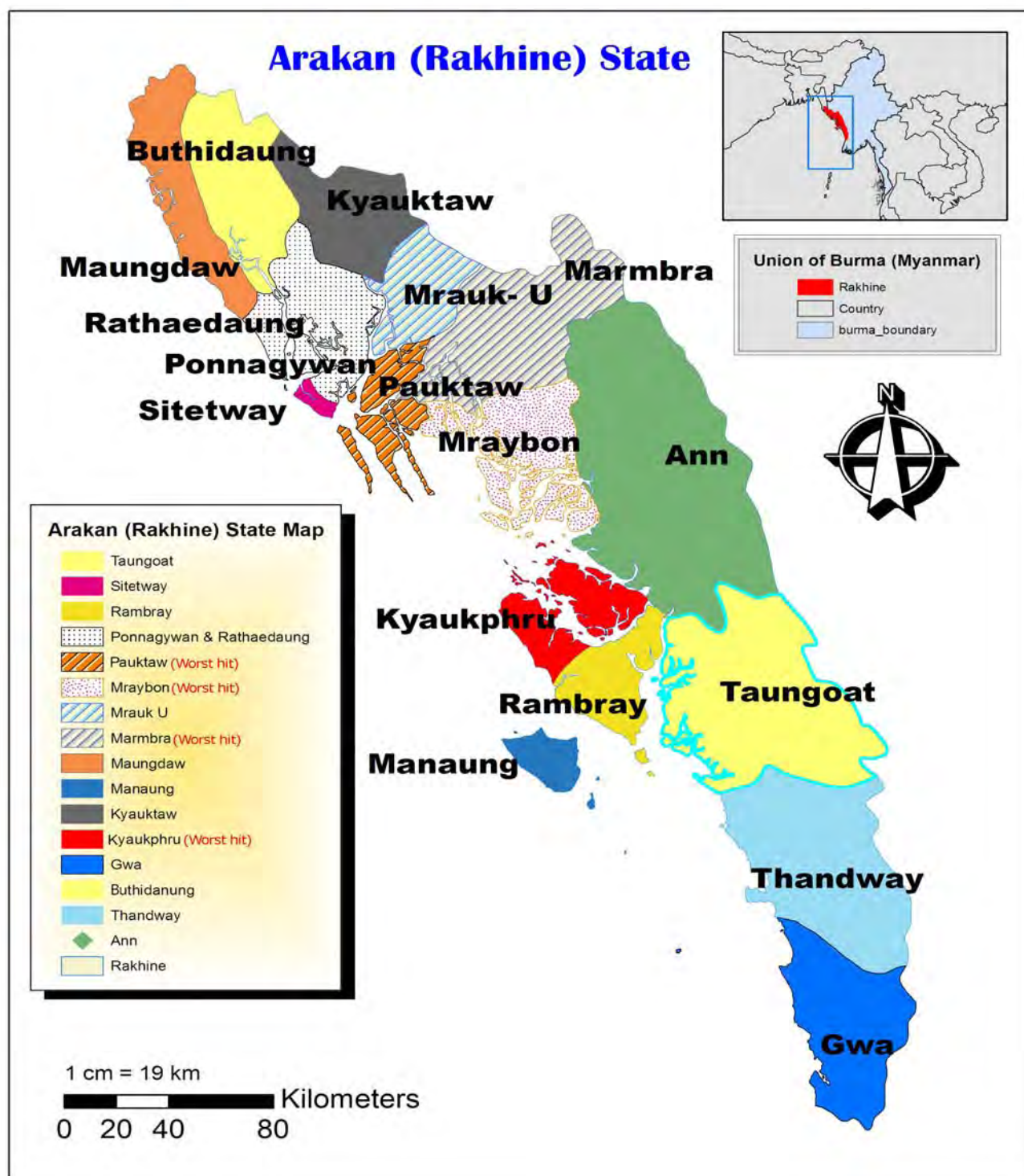
(Source: World Bank)

Table 1.1: INGO Expenditure in Burma and South Arakan State (2007-2010)

Total INGO Expenditure in Burma		South Arakan State (>4% Burma Pop.)	
		(\$)	%
2007	\$48,745,810	0	0
2008	\$171,651,185	0	0
2009	\$128,396,440	0	0
2010	\$98,050,732	465,000	0.47
Total 2007-2010:	\$446,844,167*	\$465,000	0.10%

(Source: Myanmar Information Management Unit)¹⁴

* \$450m is the estimated 2011-12 government's combined budget for healthcare and education.¹⁵



Casualties



Damage



Flooding



Giri affected futureless children



Patients of Giri affected victims



Relief Distribution to Giri affected community



Shelters of Giri affected victims



Arakan Political Activism

In 2007 the first monks since 1990 to take to the streets anywhere in Burma were in Sittetway, where on 28 August 2007 some 300 Rakhine monks marched and chanted a *metta sutra*¹⁶: “the so-called Saffron Revolution, whose first stirrings occurred not in Rangoon, but among ethnic minority monks and nuns in Rakhine State, blazing the trail for thousands more all over the country¹⁷.” Many Arakanese monks later participated in uprisings in Rangoon and elsewhere in Burma.¹⁸

Several large multi-national development projects are causing increasing damage to both fauna and flora, while also severely impacting people’s rights.¹⁹ People in Arakan are very isolated from information on what happens regionally and globally, due both to a virtually nonexistent education infrastructure and a lack of access to information outlets. (including internet which came only in 2009, and to which only 1-3% of the population had access in 2010)²⁰ The infrastructure problem is further exacerbated by the regime, which seeks “to control the inflow and outflow of information” (Amnesty International).²¹

In the 2010 general election the only *Hluttaw* - state or region - where the government-backed USDP did not win was the Arakan State *Hluttaw*, where it lost to the *Rakhine Nationalities Development Party* (RNDP).²² The state of Arakan has historically been patriotic and very politically active both before²³ and since independence (see **Box 1.1**).

Box 1.1: Arakanese Observe Day of the Cyclone Rice Massacre

“Over 300 people were killed on 13 August 1967, when the forces of the Ne Win regime opened fire on the peaceful protesters demanding a supply of rice in front of the government-run Mra Rice Mill in Sittwe because they were suffering from famine as rice stocks ran out in the local markets. According to some town elders who witnessed and participated in the protest, the shortage of rice occurred in Arakan State in 1967 because the state had been hit by a powerful cyclone at

the same time the government was forcibly buying large stores of rice from farmers across the state and storing it in the government-owned rice mills for export to foreign countries, without consideration for the public need. 'If we would recall and compare the suffering of people on the occasion of 13 August 44 years ago and in the present day, there will be no difference. The "hungry people then were gunned down by the Ne Win-led BSPP regime, while the hungry people affected by Cyclone Giri and recent disastrous floods across Arakan State are still being neglected by the Thein Sein-led regime and being allowed to die in hunger,' said U Thein Aung. U Thein Aung, on behalf of his committee observing the Sittwe Rice Massacre called on his compatriots at home and abroad to urge the U Thein Sein government and the regional government in Arakan State to act to ensure emergency relief and food is delivered to those suffering from famine in the cyclone- and flood-affected areas of the state."

(Source: "Arakanese observe day of the rice massacre", *Narinjara*, 16 August 2011)²⁴

Structure of the Report

The report is divided into eight sections covering the situation in Arakan State before during and after Cyclone Giri. It is vital to have an understanding of the overall living conditions in Arakan State. The second section mentions that in recent decades Arakan State has been among the most backward states of the country, lacking in even the most basic provision of healthcare and education. The subsequent military regimes have only aggravated the bad socio-economic situation through consistent under spending and increased militarisation.

In the third section the methodology for this report is explained. The next section discusses the deplorable state of crucial factors for disaster survival such as early warning and mitigation measures as well as the disappearance of the mangrove forests – a recipe for the next disaster. This section starts with a short flashback to previous cyclones that have hit Arakan State in recent years as seen through the eyes of survivors.

Sections five and six contain an analysis of the interviews conducted at various times after Cyclone Giri struck. The impact of the cyclone will be described in a discussion of the death toll and damage caused, including discrepancies between the official figures and the data from our fieldwork. A review of the relief effort that followed in the weeks and months after 22 October 2010 will get ample attention.

We will show that interference by the authorities with the relief delivery led to what we can only describe as various regrettable incidents. Part of the explanation for the government interference was the imminent general election. Despite all the deaths and misery caused by the cyclone, the media coverage was limited and so was the level of attention paid by the Burmese democratic opposition groups, both inside and outside the country.

Section six focuses predominantly on problems in 2011 such as the torrential rains and flooding as well as food shortages and the lack of continuing assistance that has exacerbated the living conditions of the Cyclone Giri victims. The conclusions are followed by recommendations to various relevant parties, a brief overview of the *Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation* (AHRDO) that compiled the report, and, lastly, the annexures, which contain the translated transcriptions of the interviews referred to in the main body of the report.

"This [Giri] disaster was in danger of being forgotten, ignored and unseen by the international community," said the UK Secretary of State for International Development, *Andrew Mitchell*, on 15 November 2010.^{xxv} However, despite his warning Giri seems to have become another muted occurrence in Arakan state that hasn't made it into the international or the INGO spotlight and has been largely ignored.

SECTION 2: ARAKAN BEFORE CYCLONE GIRI

2.1 Pre-Independence Arakan

Arakan State has been a sovereign state for more than thousand years with four dynastic eras: the third Dhanyawaddy (CE 370/425 – 6th century, and the original home of the *Mahamuni* shrine),^{xxvi} Vesali (CE 6th – 10th century),²⁷ Laymro (11th – 15th century)²⁸ and Mrauk-U (CE 1430 – 1784).²⁹ It lost its sovereignty with the 1784 Burman invasion³⁰ and since then, Arakan has been one of Burma's many states.³¹ Separated from Burma's other ethnic nationalities by the Arakan Roma mountain ranges, the Arakanese people have customs and a language of their own.

Arakan's rich traditional culture is characterised by its literature, music, dance and religious buildings. Evidence of early scriptures can be found dating back to around the first century CE.³² It is believed that *Rakkhawanna Akkhara* (Arakanese alphabet) evolved from the Brahmi language of Northern India.³³

Those of Rakhine ethnic origin (under 70% of the state population) are nearly all Theravada Buddhists³⁴. Buddhism has been an important element of Arakanese nationality throughout much of its history and some Buddhist scholars believe that the Arakanese have been learning the Dhamma since the 6th century BCE, while the Buddha was still alive.³⁵ There are hundreds of ancient pagodas, temples and shrines in Arakan to this day, especially in the old capital Mrauk-U.³⁶

At its peak the Arakan kingdom took tributes from as far away as Murshidabad, India, in the west, and the Mon capital of Pegu, in the east as well as much of southern Burma.³⁷ Archaeological evidence suggests that it was also among the first kingdoms in the region to use currency³⁸ and that it boasted a flourishing trade relationship with Portuguese, Dutch, Persian and other trading nations.³⁹

In 1824, Arakan was again conquered and annexed to the British of India for the East India Company.⁴⁰ In 1826, the first official borders between central Burma and Arakan were demarcated and stretched from the mountainous region of Paletwa down to Cape Negrais in the Irrawaddy Delta, which allotted Arakan a total area of over 20,000 sq. ml. (51,800 km²).⁴¹ This was later reduced when the British separated the southern Bessein region during the second Anglo-Burman War.⁴²

Following World War Two, Arakan was included in the Union of Burma and, as with Burma's other ethnic minority states, has since been under the rule of successive Burman regimes, which have never granted the Arakanese the slightest autonomy. After independence and in accordance with the Constitution,⁴³ Paletwa Township (formerly called "*Arakan Hill Tracts*" or "*Northern Arakan*") became part of Chin Division, decreasing Arakan to its current size of 14,200 sq. ml. (36,777 km²).⁴⁴

2.2 Post-Independence Arakan

Modern Arakan State is located on Burma's western coast, along the Bay of Bengal, and borders Chin State in the north, Magway Region, Bago Region and Irrawaddy Region in the east, and the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh to the northwest. The Arakan Roma Mountains (10,049 ft/3,063 m) form the natural border between Rakhine State and central Burma.⁴⁵

Arakan state has more than 3 million inhabitants, primarily of Rakhaing ethnic origin.⁴⁶ The region benefits from a wealth of natural resources from its ancient forests, highly productive ocean, coal, oil and gas, and fertile plains. The state is divided into five districts: Sitetway, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Kyaukpheuu and Thandway and these districts are further divided into 17 townships. There are a total of 1,164 village tracts within the townships.⁴⁷

The state capital is Sitetway, known as "*Akyab*" in Rakhaing (Arakanese), with an estimated population of 153,341.⁴⁸ It is situated in the Bay of Bengal on an estuarial island at the confluence of the Kaladan, Laymro and Mayu rivers, which makes it surrounded by fertile land. The city grew significantly during the British colonial era when it was a very important commercial town, a centre for imports and exports, especially rice.

The majority of people in Arakan State live in rural areas. They make a living from fishing and farming and rely heavily on the use of rivers for both. In addition to important fish stocks in the ocean, local populations get much of their food from these rivers and their tributaries. Furthermore, 85% of Arakan State's cultivated farmland is occupied by rice paddy fields,⁴⁹ with the major area located on two of the region's rare large plains, which are along the Kaladan and Laymro River valleys. Due to inadequate road infrastructure, trade of both fish and agricultural products depend on the health of waterways.

Throughout its history, Arakan has been largely reliant on agriculture, predominantly the production of rice. Since Burma's first *coup d'état* in 1962 rice production has been ruthlessly exploited by the military authorities. The majority of profits made from farming and fishing go straight into the pockets of the government, which then fund further military expansion and fuel more human rights abuses that all lead to the extreme impoverishment of millions of people. The sad state of affairs in modern day Arakan has caused various problems as highlighted in a 2007 *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* survey: food insecurity (87.20%), economic motive (78.20%), other Human Rights violations (69.20%), *louq a pay* (66.70%), extortion/heavy taxation (66.70%), land confiscation (53.80%), and restriction of movement (34.60%).⁵⁰

2.3 Socio-Economic Degradation Under the Military Regimes

Burma is the second poorest country in Asia after Afghanistan, Arakan is the second poorest state of Burma (43.5 % of the Arakanese are poor)

Burma is recognized as one of the world's least developed countries (LDC) since 1987⁵¹. It ranks 149 out of 187 on the UNDP *Human Development Index*⁵² and is Asia's second most underdeveloped country, characterised by extreme poverty and lack of development. UNDP figures show that in 2010, 43.5% of Arakan State's inhabitants lived below the poverty line. This was increase of more than 5% since 2005, and placed Arakan behind Chin State as the poorest state.⁵³ Out the total of 14 Burmese states, Arakan is the "worst," according to several development indicators (see **Table 2.1**).

Table 2.1: 2010 Development Indicators of Arakan State

2010 Development Indicators (Millennium Development Goal)	Arakan State		Burma Average
	ranking/14 states		
access to improved sanitation (MDG7)	worst	54.3%	79%
access to electricity	worst	26.4%	48.8%
unemployment rate	worst	6.7%	1.7%
economic dependency ratio	worst	1.09	0.67%
Poverty	2 nd worst	43.5 %	25.6%
rural demographic dependency ratio	2 nd worst	0.67	0.56
labour force participation rate	2 nd worst	58.4%	70.5%

(Source: *Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar: MDG-Relevant Information*, UNDP 2007 and 2009-10)⁵⁴

Arakan has undergone massive socio-economic changes over the past fifty years. These changes increased since the *State Law and Order Restoration Council* (SLORC) took power in 1988, which changed its name to the *State Peace and Development Council* (SPDC) in 1997.

Farmers who once engaged in subsistence farming and sold any surplus from their annual harvest to local villages, are now forced to harvest crops at least twice a year for government distribution.⁵⁵ Only a small amount of the rice produced continues to be sold locally by independent farmers. However, these small entrepreneurs are subject to extortionate unofficial "taxes" enforced by military personnel in the area. Roadblocks are set up along transportation routes by soldiers who require passing traders to pay them in cash, gasoline or produce (usually in the form of rice).⁵⁶ The navy has established a similar system of

checkpoints on the rivers and many civilian-owned boats have been destroyed at these points for failing to pay the “tax”.⁵⁷ The prevalence of military extortion means that many civilian landowners, even those possessing hundreds of acres, live in poverty.

Many multi-million “development” projects initiated by the junta have inflicted unprecedented suffering on civilians in recent years. These projects include the *Sitetway-Rangoon Highway*,⁵⁸ the *Sitetway-Ann-Minbu Railway*,⁵⁹ the *Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility*,⁶⁰ the *Shwe Gas Project*,⁶¹ and numerous hydropower dams.⁶² Amnesty International has reported that such projects create a long list of problems including, but not limited to, forced or unpaid labour and forced relocation⁶³. These projects destroy both the natural environment and damage the integrity of archaeological and historically cultural sites.⁶⁴ Even though there is gas, oil and hydropower in Arakan, local residents only have four hours of electricity per day, and then only in the towns⁶⁵; this is Burma’s area with the least access to electricity (see **Table 2.1**) with most of the resources being redistributed or sold abroad.

2.4 Healthcare and Education

“The humanitarian needs of Burma’s people for food, clean water, and basic health care are immense because the military government has for so long mismanaged the economy and put stringent conditions on aid.[...] The good news is that after Nargis, the capabilities of Burmese relief workers have grown to help fill this gap. The bad news is that gains in the cyclone affected area have not been matched in the rest of the country, where millions of Burmese are living in unnecessary poverty fueled by systematic corruption and repression.”

“Burma after cyclone repression impedes civil society and aid”, Human Rights Watch⁶⁶

The healthcare system in Arakan State and throughout Burma is very underdeveloped. As expected, the health of people in rural areas of Arakan State is also poor. Medicine is difficult to access, many villagers die of treatable diseases, and the people suffer the highest rates of malnutrition in Burma (see **Table 2.2**). *“Although healthcare is nominally free, in reality patients have to pay for medicine and treatment, even in public clinics and hospitals. Public hospitals lack many of the basic facilities and equipment.”⁶⁷* In general, the healthcare infrastructure outside of Rangoon and Mandalay is extremely poor, but is worse in remote areas like Arakan State, where there are only 41 hospital beds for every 100,000 people, which ranks as the fourth lowest in the country and compares poorly to the national average of 67.⁶⁸



Table 2.2: 2010 Health Indicators of Arakan State

Development Indicators (Millennium Development Goal)	Arakan State	National Average	
	ranking/14 states	2010	2010
underweight under 5 years old (MDG1)	Worst	52.8%	32%
severe malnutrition under 5 years old	Worst	16.3%	9.1%
antenatal care (at least 1 visit)	Worst	67%	83.3%
births attended by skilled personnel (MDG5)	Worst	55.2%	77.9%
immunisation against DPT	Worst	56%	74.6%
access to safe drinking water (MDG7)	2 nd worst	49.5 %	69.4%
food poverty incidence	2 nd worst	10.0	4.8

(Source: *Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar: MDG-Relevant Information*, UNDP 2009-10)⁶⁹

Arakan State also suffers from Burma's highest levels of illiteracy among children and adults.

*"Most of the village tracts have at least one primary school (class 1 to 4). But remote areas' admission is weakened by distance and lack of communication during the rainy season. But, widespread poverty keeps many children have to leave school as they are compelled to support their families. Most of the students have to give up their schools during the winter and summer seasons to provide help to their parents in their croplands."*⁷⁰

In the 2005-2006 academic year, the primary transition rate⁷¹ in Arakan State was the country's lowest.⁷² Public education is available for middle school (grades 5 to 8) and high school (grades 9 to 10) as well as "self-supported"⁷³ schools, where students' families and villagers have to pay the teachers in cash and paddy.⁷⁴ Despite this, for 2009-2010, Arakan State had the country's lowest enrolment levels for both primary and secondary education (see **Table 2.3**)

Table 2.3: 2010 Education Indicators of Arakan State

Development Indicators	Rakhine State	National Average	
	ranking/14 states	%	%
literacy above 15 years old	worst	75.1%	90.6%
enrolment in primary school	worst	71.4%	87.7%
enrolment in secondary school	worst	32.0%	52.5%
access to secondary school	2 nd worst	23.3%	33.9%

(Source: *Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar: MDG-Relevant Information*, UNDP 2009-10)⁷⁵

"Education levels are also worsened by the lack of teachers in rural areas and the poor quality of teaching"⁷⁶ as many teachers choose not to work in rural areas due to a lack of facilities and poor transportation in the area. "Teachers receive a negligible salary, and it compels them to increase their income through other means."⁷⁷ Teachers are often supplementing their wages by offering private tutoring classes that provide students with the key information needed to pass school exams, meaning students from poor families cannot afford extra classes and therefore cannot pass their exams. The only higher education institutes in Arakan State are: Sitetway University, Computer University (Sitetway), Government Technical Institute (Thandway), Kyaukphru Education College, and Technological University (Sitetway),⁷⁸ but even these are lacking in resources or qualified lecturers.

Box 2.1: Deprivation of Education in Arakan, Burma

“Education in Burma has been severely impacted by more than four decades of military rule. The military regime views potentially politically active university and high school students as one of the biggest threats to their grip on power, so all non-military education is treated as expendable. [...] The regime has a fear of student movements, given the history of student movement in the past people’s uprisings. As a result, the regime often shuts down the schools and limits the freedom of education. [...] All civilian schools and universities throughout Burma suffer from a lack of resources and qualified educators, a problem found in many developing countries; however, unique to Burma is the fact that the government actively tries to thwart universal and advanced higher education. Due to the deteriorating levels of education available at government schools, students and parents are increasingly turning to other educational options when these are available. In Arakan State, a large number of students are reportedly leaving government schools to enrol in schools run by Buddhist monasteries. Many people in this area believe that monastic education is better quality and less expensive than education at state-run schools. There were approximately 500 students enrolled in just one monastery in Sitetway [Shwe Zay Dee]. [...] Only a small percentage [3.7%]⁷⁹ of people in Arakan are able to continue their higher education that passed high school. In order to support their families, many students have to quit schools to take jobs that don’t require a high education level, sometimes migrating to other countries where there are more employment opportunities. Other students cannot attend universities because they have fled their homes or been imprisoned for political activities.”

(Source: Fayas Ahmed)⁸⁰

2.5 Increased Militarisation

Arakan State has become increasingly militarised mainly to secure the land and the resources for the above-mentioned development projects: by 2006 the number of infantry battalions in the *Western Command* (Arakan State and Paletwa Township, Chin State) amounted to 60 battalions.⁸¹ The headquarters of the Western Commander is located in Ann, Arakan State, and the commanders office controls many of the profitable businesses nearby, for which licenses and contracts are needed.⁸² The military’s presence in Arakan state has caused continual human rights violations for locals, and there are even cases of extrajudicial killings.⁸³

As we will highlight,⁸⁴ this militarisation has also had a profound negative impact on the Cyclone Giri relief effort:

“Troops from an artillery battalion and Brigade 9 of the Division Command have been deployed at almost all cyclone affected areas in Myebon Township, according to local residents. ‘It is not easy for anyone who wants to go and help the cyclone victims because they are questioned by the military personnel,’ said one Myebon resident. ‘All donations must go through them. It is more like a war zone than a disaster area.’”⁸⁵

This means access to the disaster area, damaged villages and affected communities is difficult, and relief funds, goods and donations are likely to be siphoned off before reaching those in need.

As this section has highlighted, Arakan state suffers from underdevelopment, a lack of government spending and a brutal military presence. Despite its natural beauty and resources they are forced to live under a regime who does not wish to improve the situation of residents, only extract and sell off whatever natural resources they can in order to make a profit, leaving locals to live in poverty. And when natural disasters such as Giri hit, the people of Arakan state are left with little options to improve their situation without outside help.

SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY

Local volunteers, including *Giri Relief Committee*⁸⁵ workers, with experience of conducting post-Cyclone Nargis interviews, were asked to conduct interviews and provided not only the primary data used in this report, but also general information of relevance.

The interviews covered the government response to the crisis, relief activities of local and international agencies, areas of operation, unmet emergency needs for survivors, and local sentiment regarding these topics. Interview subjects were asked about the survivors and their families, to describe the events on the day of the cyclone, and about their general experiences between the storm and the day of the interview. All interviews were conducted using open-ended questions in an informal qualitative format.

The majority of the interviews were both audio and video recorded, which were sent to a central location to be transcribed, translated into English, and then checked and analysed for accuracy by a bilingual team before being edited by native English speakers. The *Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation* provided technical support for data processing.

In total 200 interviews were conducted by members of the *Giri Relief Committee* and community relief groups in various batches: 55 audio, 60 video and 85 written interviews:

- 160 in the first two weeks of November 2010, in the worst hit areas of Arakan State;
- 10 in August 2011 regarding some of the previous cyclones to strike Arakan
- 30 in September and October 2011 regarding the situation in Arakan one year on from Cyclone Giri.

Unfortunately, due to problems with smuggling the interviews out of Burma, and damage during transit to some videos, only 120 of these interviews are usable for Cyclone Giri: Two Years On. Since this number of respondents is a relatively small sample, the findings of this report should be considered indicative rather than conclusive, and it is our hope that it will serve as a benchmark for future reports.

The interviewees included various cyclone survivors, such as soldiers, teachers, and local relief workers; 135 survivors and 30 relief workers were interviewed. All interviewees were open and answers were given with consent of the adult interviewee, with the understanding that they were to be used in a publication. In order to protect the identities of the interviewees, we have omitted names from the report.

In 2012, AHRDO conducted 75 interviews with cyclone survivors, relief workers, teachers, farmers, fishermen and youth as migrant workers in Kachin State, Northern Burma and Thailand to get current updates of affected areas after two years of Cyclone Giri in Arakan State. AHRDO also conducted research on Giri affected people's petitions that were submitted to local NGOs, INGOs, political organisations such as National League of Democracy (NLD) and local authorities, to obtain information and data from the local Giri affected community on how their farming and fishing livelihoods were devastated during the cyclone.

AHRDO have conducted this independent assessment and resulting report to highlight Giri's true impact on Arakan State, to both the rest of Burma and the wider international community. INGO's and UN agencies have conducted assessments and written reports under the government's restriction, as they were only being able to access those areas into which the government allowed, which resulted in the use of official information and statistics. By contrast, the *Giri Relief Committee* and community relief groups were able to conduct its research without government direction.

Because, all our interviewers were local people, GRC fieldworkers were able to access areas that were prohibited to INGOs. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that the interviewees were more candid when discussing their experiences because the interviewers were known. It is our hope that this process provided a representative portrait of the complete story.

We also understand that there will be gaps in the primary sources. To fill those gaps, we have utilised secondary sources, including exiled Burmese media, such as *The Irrawaddy*, *The Democratic Voice of*

Burma, and various others. Where possible we compared information obtained from these sources with information gathered from our primary sources. However, because interviews are reflective of subjective perspectives, we suggest that where only one source is found, the reader use a healthy dose of academic scepticism.

Finally, this project has received no outside funding and the GRC field workers received no payment for their work, which was undertaken under difficult circumstances. In this report we primarily focus on the worst hit townships, where we collected more data, both regarding the damage assessment and the subsequent relief effort, however, due to limited funds and resources we were not in a position to include all areas affected.

SECTION 4: FEW LESSONS LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS CYCLONES

“It is vital that a comprehensive legislation and policy framework is in place to guide the implementation by all sectors, regions and states to allow for wise allocation of resources”

Margareta Wahlström, the UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, visiting Burma⁸⁷

The first responsibility of any government is to protect its citizens. This duty includes mitigating disaster risks. Despite all the deaths and destruction caused by cyclones throughout the pre-Giri years, Burma produced no legislation, policy framework, *Disaster Risk Reduction* (DRR) competence of regions and states, or allocation of resources. Burma is party to a number of international DRR “*Lessons Learned*” action plans and frameworks for cooperation, but action is rarely taken. These plans would have included an effective early warning system, taking mitigation measures like reinforcing storm surge embankments in high-risk areas or building up community-based preparedness programs. One simple protective measure is to guard against loss of natural mangrove forests (we will expand on this later). This deficiency calls into question whether any lessons in disaster mitigation were learned by the Burmese leadership and if they were, why hasn’t action been taken.

In recent years, more than one sever cyclone had hit Burma, each of which provided an opportunity to learn lessons. Included in this section is a brief comparison of the impact of similar cyclones that have hit Bangladesh and Burma. On a nearly annual basis, Arakan State is struck by tropical storms and cyclones during the “*cyclone seasons*.” In the Bay of Bengal, this season coincides with the pre- and post-monsoon periods⁸⁸ (see Annexure III).

We use the following definition of “*lesson learned*”:

“any successful or promising approach derived from a cyclone response that could enable actors to overcome challenges or improve efforts in future emergencies”. A ‘lesson’ must be derived from a common or well-proven response experience and address Burma’s unique political, social, or environmental circumstances.”⁸⁹

The 1968 Sitetway Cyclone, which killed 1,070 people and destroyed at least 30,000 homes,⁹⁰ the 2004 cyclone, which left 220 dead and 14,000 homeless,⁹¹ and Cyclone Mala in 2006, which killed 37 people and affected approximately 43,000 are the most notable cyclones to hit Burma.⁹² Although not a cyclone, Burma was also struck by the 2004 tsunami (that went largely unmentioned in international news) and the government eventually announced a death toll of between 60 and 80.⁹³ However, the *Arakan National Council* (ANC) stated that the death toll in Arakan State alone was at least 96.⁹⁴ Despite being absent for the aftermath of Giri, government representatives have participated in “*Lesson Learned*” action plans for over 20 years. They even attended disaster management drills in other countries as recently as 2010, and ratified the binding *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response* (see **Box 4.1**).

Box 4.1: Burma's pre-Giri Participation in DRR "Lessons Learned" Action Plans/Organisations (1986-2010)

- 1986 Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC);
- 1990-1999 UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction;
- 1991 UNGA Res. 46/182 (19 December 1991) on Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the UN;
- 1998 Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC);
- 1999 UN secretariat of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR);
- 2003 ISDR Asia Partnership on DRR (IAP) and UN Regional Coordinating Mechanism (UN-RCM) for disasters;
- 2003 UNGA Res. 57/152 (3 March 2003) to prepare for and respond to natural disasters;
- 2003 ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM): ASEAN Response Action Plan; ASEAN Disaster Information Sharing and Communication Network (ASEAN DISCNet) ASEAN Disaster Management Information Network (ADMIN); ASEAN Day for Disaster Management; ASEAN Regional Disaster Management Framework;
- 2004-2005 numerous "Lessons Learned" action plans after the tsunami;
- 2004-2010 ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management (ARPD);
- 2005-2010 ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX);
- 2005 UNGA Res. 59/279 (19 January 2005) to strengthen emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention after the Indian Ocean tsunami;
- 2005 ASEAN Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster;
- 2005 DRR world conference in Kobe, Japan, adopted the Hyogo DRR Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 2015;
- 2005 ASEAN member states ratified (entry into force: 2009) the legally binding ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) including ASEAN Standby Arrangements for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response;
- 2005 ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Relief Operations;
- 2005 ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response;
- 2005 First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) with the Beijing DRR Declaration (2005);
- 2006 ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Management and Emergency Response;
- 2007 Second AMCDRR with the Delhi DRR Declaration (2007);
- 2007-2009 Global Platform for DRR (GP 2007, 2009);
- 2008 numerous "Lessons Learned" action plans after Nargis;
- 2008 Third AMCDRR with the Kuala Lumpur DRR Declaration (2008);
- 2008-10 UNGA adopted 7 resolutions on Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (IDRL): A/RES/65/264, A/RES/65/133, A/RES/64/251, A/RES/64/76, A/RES/63/141, A/RES/63/139, A/RES/63/137;
- 2009-2015 HFA Implementation Regional Action Plan implements these AMCDRR Declarations;
- 2009 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint for responding to disasters;
- 2009 Mekong Forum on Legal Preparedness for Disasters and Health Emergencies;
- 2009 Hua Hin Statement on East Asia Summit (EAS) cooperation on Disaster Management;
- 2010 WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) Working Group on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (WG-DPP) finalised the Annual Operating Plan (AOP)

and *Training on Preparation of Disaster Management Drills* and observance of *Disaster Department Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM)’s National Crisis Management Drill 2010 (C-MEX10)* in Thailand; and

- 2010 *Fourth AMCDRR* (25-28 October) in Korea: 50 states adopt the *Incheon DRR Declaration (2010)* and the *Incheon Regional Roadmap and Action Plan on DRR through Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Asia and the Pacific (Incheon REMAP)*.

In this last Ministerial Conference, the 25 October earthquake and tsunami in Mentawai, Indonesia, were mentioned, but Giri (22 October) was not.

But despite attending workshops and activities the junta did not build defences or fund early warning systems and the victims had to rely on their local communities for relief. We interviewed survivors of the 1968, 2004 and 2006 cyclones, and each reported that no support was provided to the survivors. In one interview, a 72 year-old woman from Sareprum Village, Pauktaw Township recalled the 1968 cyclone. According to her report, neither the government nor INGOs provided support to the victims (see interview excerpt 1 in Annexure I).

A 29 year-old man from Sitetway remembered the devastation caused by the 2004 Cyclone and said “[un] fortunately, I heard that no support or relief supplies were given to the survivors of the cyclone by either local government or the international communities.” (see interview excerpt 2 in Annexure I)

A monk from Bazunphae Village, Mrauk-U Township, reported the same pattern for Cyclone Mala in 2006 (see interview excerpt 3 in Annexure I). These reports suggest that Burma has failed to meet its obligations to protect its people, as planned during many international disaster-preparedness events.

4.1 Misleading Early Warning

“[A] government that even censors the weather”

Aye Chan Myate, “Blowing in the Wind,” *The Irrawaddy*, 25 March 2011⁹⁵

One effective way to mitigate the impact of a cyclone is to alert the affected population through an early warning system, so they can take appropriate steps. In a country where the majority of the population is not online, or doesn’t have even access to electricity, an effective early warnings system does not simply mean uploading information onto a website, as the government did. It must be disseminated by as many available media outlets as possible and must be appropriately tailored to the target population so as to reach the maximum audience. The art of this process requires that people are notified of the procedures to follow in the event of a disaster, to be able to recognise an oncoming disaster as well as identify the location of temporary shelter and relief supplies. This is common sense and would not require an international convention. It seems the difficulty lies in assigning responsibility within the government, or even registering the need for a comprehensive early warning system and in Burma one is still not in place.⁹⁶

Ultimately, any warning system will begin with the nation’s meteorological service. In Burma, this agency is the *Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH)*,⁹⁷ *Central Forecasting Office (CFO)* in Rangoon, since it already observes the weather, monitors ships’ reports and radar and satellite⁹⁸ data. Together with the *Myanmar Post and Telecommunications* and *Department of Civil Aviation*, the *CFO* handles the collection and dissemination of meteorological data in Burma.⁹⁹

The CFO should provide cyclone and surge warnings to the population because, so long as a cyclone is within the range of a particular meteorological centre, the CFO is in continuous surveillance of the storm. Every three hours, the CFO transmits its observations to RSMC New Delhi and other Bay of Bengal countries. A special weather outlook issued observation will also contain the 72 hrs forecast of a cyclone, and have been in use since December 2008.

Whenever a cyclone is present in the north Indian Ocean, between longitude 45° E to 100° E, storm advisories are issued every three hours between 00:00 and 21:00 UTC. Storm surge guidance is

incorporated into these advisories and supplementary advisories may issue outside the regimen to report a change in direction or intensity.¹⁰⁰

During Giri, the cyclone was duly tracked, and the *National Disaster Preparedness Planning Central Committee* (NDPCC)¹⁰¹ did issue warnings. These warnings were broadcast on Myanmar Television (MRTV) and radios¹⁰², and through dailies such as *The New Light of Myanmar* (NLM).¹⁰³ These warnings were defective in several ways. First, the severity of the wind speed had been underestimated. Originally, the wind speed was reported as only 35-50 mph (56-80 km/h), and only at the time of landfall was this revised to the dangerous 100-120 mph (161-193 km/h). In reality, the wind speed was 160 mph (257km/h). What warnings did issue did not reach the appropriate population because of the limited access to electricity, many of the most vulnerable people could not have received radio or TV broadcasts and many others are illiterate and would not have been able to read the printed broadcasts. Finally, insufficient time was given for the warnings to reach the population who did receive them, because the evacuation of the affected areas would have required many hours more than the 6 to 12 that were given.¹⁰⁴ (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Chronology of a Disaster Wrongly Foretold: DMH observations of Cyclone Giri

date of publication	observation the previous day	wind speed mph [km/h]	remarks	forecast	mile (km) SW of Kyaukpghru to landfall	squalls	tidal waves
20 Oct	17.30 pm	-	low pressure area	-	-	-	-
21 Oct	12.30 pm	35 [56]	rain or thunderstorm	moderate storm in 24 hrs	isolated	-	moderate to large
	12.30 pm	40 [64]	depression	landfall in 36 hrs	180 (290)	likely	moderate to rough
	9.30 pm	50 [80]	cyclone orange level	landfall in 24 hrs	140 (225)	widespread	moderate to strong
23 Oct.	5.30 am	65-70 [104-113]	red level (possible landslides)	(landfall in 18 hrs)	110 (177)	(likely to be widespread)	(12 feet) [3.66m]
	9 am	70-75 [113-120]	(red level) (torrential rains)	landfall by 12 am	70 (113)	(likely to be widespread)	(12 feet) [3.66m]
	12.30 pm (1.00 pm)	75-85 [120-137]	red level (possible landslides)	landfall by evening	50 (80)	(likely to be widespread)	(12 feet) [3.66m]
	3.30 pm	100-120 [161-193]	severe cyclonic storm brown level	landfall	0	(likely to be widespread)	(12 feet) [3.66m]
	7.30 pm	100-120 [161-193]	cyclone torrential rains possible landslide (brown level)	-	-	(likely to be widespread)	(12 feet) [3.66m]
	10.30 pm	70 [113]	Storm	moderate storm in 12hrs (24hrs)	-	-	-

(Source: *The New Light of Myanmar*, 20,21,22,23 October 2010.)

The additional observations between brackets were mentioned in a later article of the same issue.

What did this mean for people on the ground in Arakan? The potential damage from a cyclone is immense. While the warnings only mentioned a wind speed of 75 mph (121 km/h) up to 3 hours before impact, the actual double wind speed (150 mph or 241 km/h) upon impact is meant an increase of force of 256 compared to what the warnings suggested.¹⁰⁵

Many casualties had known about the approaching storm, but they did not consider a 75mph storm to be different from the average storm during the annual storm season. There had been little education regarding cyclones and the warnings did not predict the real intensity or exact time of landfall of the cyclone, so many did not evacuate, or they considered that they had more time to do so. In Arakan State only 5% of the poor and 28% of the non-poor have house roofs that are not constructed of wood, bamboo or thatch,¹⁰⁶ hence, more effective warnings would have enabled more people to reach higher land or the hard-walled shelters - monasteries, mosques, churches and schools. It is indicative that state-controlled 7MRTV and NLM advised people to believe official reports and not rumours about the storm.¹⁰⁷

It was not the first time that the authorities failed in their warnings and many thousands of people were not aware of the approaching devastating cyclone.¹⁰⁸ In May 2008 Tun Lwin (the former director-general of the DMH) claimed that he had attempted to issue a Nargis cyclone warning to the public in his popular online weather blog.¹⁰⁹ However, he was deterred from doing so by members of the junta - “a government that even censors the weather”.¹¹⁰ The same thing happened to some extent in the run up to Giri as the DMH repeatedly denied that a dangerous storm was imminent,¹¹¹ however, as noted above, the government were more proactive in the run up to Cyclone Giri in comparison to Nargis.

Some early warning measures are inexpensive and can be implemented in the short term: an installation of emergency community address systems, designed to broadcast weather warnings over a wide area by amplifying emergency radio broadcasts via loudspeakers. Similar infrastructure has been installed in the Delta villages and is urgently needed in Arakan State.¹¹²

Equally saving thousands of lives is the purchase of the necessary meteorological devices. Unlike its neighbours Bangladesh and India, Burma has no dedicated radar network to help predict the location and height of surges. In March 2011 Tun Lwin (the former director-general of the DMH) claimed that Burma could not afford to purchase radar equipment to measure meteorological conditions, which would help to reduce the impact of future cyclones. The DMH has been proposing the purchase of such equipment as far back as 1997.¹¹³ It highlights the priorities of Burma's generals that a small radar station costing US\$7 million¹¹⁴ is deemed unaffordable, while US\$2.04 billion is allocated for military spending for the financial year 2011/12, which amounts to approximately 23 percent of total proposed government spending.¹¹⁵ This level of defense expenditure is incredibly high.

4.2 Lack of Mitigation Measures

“While Cyclone Nargis was the worst disaster to have struck Myanmar in living memory, the Ayeyarwady division in the Delta is not actually the area at greatest risk. The area of Myanmar most vulnerable to cyclones is Rakhine State.”

Robert Turner et al., *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis*¹¹⁶

Despite being ravaged by several cyclones every year, Burma had never implemented any comprehensive DRR programmes. It seems low on their priorities, however a simple early warning system could save lives and save the government money, time and effort in the long run. In Arakan state there still is nothing even resembling a comprehensive programme that includes community preparedness, cyclone shelters, embankments projects etc. despite the official rhetoric towards the country's most disaster-prone state¹¹⁷. Mitigation measures require community-wide steps to raise awareness and educate people about disaster response. This empowers people to build local capacity, develop response procedures, and improves coordination between actors. Before Giri, the *Myanmar Red Cross Society* (MRCS) had trained some volunteers,¹¹⁸ however, there were no large scale DRR capacity building measures to educate the

communities and fishermen who are impacted the most. In the case of a cyclone, the common reaction of people in Arakan State is to head to the closest monastery, school or mosque as its walls are more resistant (and there are no cyclone shelters). Even offering basic education or information in these common shelter sites could reduce casualties and minimise damage.

In *Asian Development Bank's* (ADB) latest Burma survey it warned that 34.1 % of the population was at risk of coastal flooding.¹¹⁹ In Arakan embankments are very important for the paddy farms in areas surrounded by salt water and rivers.

But a comprehensive flood control programme and drainage improvement includes more than embankments, it requires sluices, river regulators, river closures, drainage channels, natural detention basins, channel improvements, flow diversions, bank stabilization and anti-erosive measures to free land from flood water so as to protect the cultivated area. In short, what is lacking in Arakan is a coastal embankment project, comprising a network of hundreds of km of embankments and drainage sluices against flood and saline water intrusion. Polders (a Dutch word meaning an area enclosed by dykes) and dykes provide protection to the land from tidal inundation. Embankments provide also good road communication, thereby contributing to the socio-economic conditions, and are part of irrigation projects. Large scale projects like this would improve the quality of life for people in Arakan state as well as reducing damage in the event of natural disasters.

Early warning and mitigation measures are only two elements in the *Comprehensive Cyclone Preparedness Programme* (CCP) that has been implemented in Bangladesh (see **Box 4.2**) and that could be used as a model for Burma.

Box 4.2: The Bangladesh Comprehensive Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CCP)

The CPP is jointly operated by the *Red Crescent Society* and the *Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief* and includes 32,000 trained volunteers. Each ward has a transistor radio, a megaphone-cum-siren, a signal torchlight and first aid kit and almost every sub district has a wireless set for direct communication with Dhaka. All the armed forces and relevant ministries and organisations have their relief duties and there is a standing cyclone order laying down their actions during various stages. A storm-protection system that includes warning sirens and evacuation routes mobilises people before the impending cyclones and 2,500 cyclone shelters in the coastal area minimised the death toll.

(Source: based on *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*)¹²⁰

In fact Bangladesh, a country with similar GDP and poverty levels as Burma, as well as being similarly susceptible to cyclones and tropical storms, can be used as a comparison and model for DRR. The Bangladeshi government has invested heavily in DRR; Burma's military junta has made no such investment (see **Box 4.3**).

Box 4.3: Size doesn't matter: Why the same-sized cyclone had different impacts in Bangladesh and Burma

"Cyclone Sidr that hit Bangladesh in November 2007 was similar to Cyclone Nargis, the cyclone that has devastated much of Burma since 2 May 2008. Yet the impacts from these events are worlds apart – Bangladesh lost 3,000 people while it is estimated that Burma will have more than 100,000 deaths. With similar Human Development Index rankings, similar poverty levels and similar annual GDP, the lives and vulnerabilities of Burmese and Bangladeshi communities living on extensive coastal tributary systems are remarkably alike. Why then did similar cyclone events affecting similar communities result in strikingly different disasters? The answer: Bangladesh has incorporated early warning systems, mitigation measures and community preparedness activities into its development program, and Burma has not. Three key disaster risk reduction measures that made all the difference in Bangladesh are: 1. Effective early warning systems: Bangladesh has a 48-hour early warning system that advises people



Cyclone Giri and Arakan, Western Burma (Satellite image by NASA)

at risk to evacuate to safe cyclone shelters before cyclones make landfall. During Cyclone Sidr, over 3 million people were evacuated from danger, with 1.5 million being placed in cyclone shelters. While the Burmese Government was informed of Cyclone Nargis 72 hours before landfall, they had no early warning system and information was not communicated to communities in danger. **2. Accurate embankments:** Bangladesh has invested heavily in flood and storm surge embankments in high risk areas. While storm surge reached up to 6m in some areas during Cyclone Sidr, anticipating a cyclone of this size, embankments had been

built higher than 6m and thus protected many households. Burma has no such structural mitigation. **3. Preserved mangrove forests:** Bangladesh has worked with key partner development agencies over 10 years to protect the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove system and world heritage site. Mangroves have been proven to mitigate the severe effects of storm surge and wind, as demonstrated in the Indian Ocean tsunami, protecting communities from the full force of these hazards. Burma has destroyed its mangrove forest system, losing its natural buffer. Disaster risk reduction actions, such as those undertaken in Bangladesh save lives. It is not the size of a natural hazard that puts communities at risk of a disaster, but rather the lack of action by Government to mitigate, prepare and warn its communities."

(Source: *Feasibility Study*, Australia Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction, 3 October 2008, Annex 6)¹²¹

By doing nothing the Burmese government has failed to protect its population. However, for DRR the international community is also accountable: information, lessons, and technical expertise must be provided to the Burmese authorities and demanded that they are implemented. *"This does not necessarily imply funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, but it does mean that technical support, particularly for community-based preparedness, planning, and risk-reduction activities should be given priority and resources made available."*¹²²

4.3 Deforestation of Mangrove Forests

"As Burma and other governments continue to abuse the environment to satisfy human greed, it seems that Burma's vulnerable populations will continue to suffer the effects of severe storms."

*"Burma battered by several severe storms", Network Media Group, 6 May 2011*¹²³

As mentioned in the introduction, Cyclones do most of their killing through floods - Giri pushed a wall of water as tall as 12 feet (3.7 meters) inland. Mangrove forests are recognised as being a natural defence against cyclones and tidal waves.¹²⁴ However huge areas of forests in Arakan State, including mangrove forests and community forests, have been forcibly confiscated by the military for their own businesses.¹²⁵ Along the coast there has been widespread deforestation of mangrove forests to accommodate shrimp farming and other businesses.¹²⁶ In Burma man-made damage to the environment includes deforestation to harvest timber, dam construction and mining. The government has ignored the negative impacts of their *"development"* policies. These have obviously had a negative effect on the ecosystem of the area, as well as leaving those living there extremely vulnerable to cyclones and tropical storms.

As the main protection against tidal surges comes from (foreshore) mangrove forests reforestation, afforestation, and social forestry form part of the protection from future cyclones. (Reforestation is: *"the restocking of existing woodlands that have been depleted"*, while afforestation is *"the process of planting trees on land formerly used for purposes other than forestry"*.¹²⁷)

Social forestry is:

*“a forestry which aims at ensuring economic, ecological, and social benefits to the people, particularly to the rural masses and those living below poverty line, especially by involving the beneficiaries right from the planning stage to the harvesting stage. The target of the social forestry is the ‘rural poor’ and not the ‘tree’ alone.”*¹²⁸

For sustainable forest resources, it is vital to ensure the active participation of the people. In the Delta a beginning has been made by the *Forest Department* of the Ministry of Forestry and the *International Tropical Timber Organisation*.¹²⁹ This can be seen as a positive first step to improving the livelihoods of citizens in the Delta area.

Apart from mangrove forests, coral reefs also function as natural barriers to storm surges.¹³⁰ However this natural defence is also being damaged due to the construction of the Shwe Gas pipeline, an undersea pipeline¹³¹ three miles north of Kyaukphe. One third of the coral reefs have been severely damaged by dynamite dredging.¹³²

4.4 Nargis: a watershed in “lessons learned”¹³³

“The disaster in the Ayeyarwady Delta was not just a cyclone, which is a natural event. The disaster was the preventable deaths and damage due to a lack of preparedness and disaster risk reduction.”

Robert Turner et al., *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis*¹³⁴

Cyclone Nargis, which struck the Irrawaddy Delta on 2 May 2008¹³⁵ was one of the worst natural disasters to hit Burma in living memory. Nargis should have provided the experience and the best lessons for the junta in respect of how to prepare for and respond to future natural disasters: but little was done to prepare for future cyclones.

The difference in death toll between Nargis and Giri, both with similar wind speeds, may be explained by a number of factors, including:

1. Despite several days advance knowledge, there was a total lack of any official warning from the government when Nargis struck. However there were some warnings issued prior to Cyclone Giri, both on the internet and over the radio. Because people had experienced Nargis recently they were somewhat aware of what was coming. There is some debate, regarding whether the warnings fully communicated the danger and the potential impact of the impending storm.
2. The Irrawaddy Delta has shallow water compared to the much deeper water of the Arakan coast and this meant that the storm surge created by Cyclone Nargis was able to reach deeper inland.
3. The Irrawaddy Delta is lower lying and closer to sea level than Arakan State, again making it more vulnerable to storm surges and flooding.
4. The population density is much lower in Arakan State, which in 2008 was 88/km², compared with 224/km² for Irrawaddy State.¹³⁶

In the aftermath of destruction brought by cyclone Nargis, there were some realisations and some lessons learned:

- There was some advance warning, limited evacuation and prepositioning of relief supplies.¹³⁷ This, without question, played a huge part in reducing the death toll caused by Giri, especially in comparison to the impact of Cyclone Nargis;¹³⁸
- After the 1968 Sitetway cyclone there was no civil society response, since no civil society existed then, and the entire relief effort was spearheaded by the U Nu government: during the Nargis response new, truly independent and experienced civil society organisations emerged, which sought to address other humanitarian/development challenges in the country;¹³⁹ and
- After Nargis the people forced the government to include information on emergency preparedness in the school curriculum.¹⁴⁰

However some post-Nargis lessons were not acted upon in the post-Giri relief and recovery:

- The SPDC only reversed its policies under sustained international pressure, e.g. by the UN, China, ASEAN, Japan, and the West after Nargis. After Giri there was no such pressure, leading to prolonged unnecessary suffering – still occurring today;
- Monitoring, evaluation and oversight mechanisms by donors was rather limited;
- Livelihood recovery should be identified and initiated as soon as possible;
- The need for a broader protection cluster to address protection gaps as protection is a challenge due to the political sensitivity associated with human rights;
- A major obstacle to reporting fraud or relief misuse is that Burmese staff are reluctant to report bad news to donors;
- The *Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan* (PONREPP) and other reports attribute a surprisingly positive role to the SPDC and its affiliates in the relief and recovery despite the junta's failure to adequately support relief and recovery by contributing only very little despite huge foreign currency reserves.¹⁴¹ no total amount SPDC/NDPCC earmarked and/or indicators of its impact on the survivors has been made public;
- The recovery would have been further if there had been no SPDC interference;¹⁴² Donors committed funds for the relief stage, but insufficient funds for the recovery stage;
- 2 years on, the hardest hit townships were still in an emergency state;¹⁴³ and
- 3 years after Nargis (2011):
 - “Shelter was never given the priority it deserved from donors, say aid workers.”¹⁴⁴
 - some 375,000 people still needed housing (UN HABITAT).
 - at least 62% of households live in non-disaster resistant shelters (UNISDR)
 - “The response of the international community was definitely not commensurate with the scale of the need.”¹⁴⁵
 - Just four agencies are still working on shelter.
 - Shelter recovery was the least funded sector of all.

As we will show in the next sections, barely two years later Giri would prove that many of these lessons were not learned. Furthermore, the Nargis window of opportunity did not end well (see **Box 4.4**) and did not help the Giri protection and assistance operation, especially in view of the upcoming election.

Box 4.4: Burma Dashes ASEAN and UN Hopes of Disaster Cooperation

“The [Tripartite Core Group (TCG): ASEAN, the UN and the government] has been a success in dealing with the delivery of assistance to the victims of Cyclone Nargis,” [ASEAN Secretary General] Surin Pitsuwan told The Irrawaddy. The initial success raised hopes in both the UN and the region that it might be a model for other devastating development problems in the country and might even have a role to play in the government’s national reconciliation process. ‘Six months into the engagement that Asean had with Myanmar [Burma] on the recovery process, there was a real momentum, that all involved were confident it could open up a larger space for humanitarian work to be expanded to involve health, poverty eradication, primary education, in other parts of the country’ he said.[...] But this all came to nothing, as the government proved reluctant to have international aid workers have unhindered access to other parts of the country. In July, the Burmese government announced the complete end to TCG operations, raising fears in the development community in Burma that the old habits of the past will resume.[...] At the root of the problem is the Burmese regime’s own strategic concerns, which Asean is well aware of. ‘After a year of trying, we got a clear message that the Government would rather concentrate on preparing for the elections that had been promised for 2010, rather than having to deal with foreign aid workers flowing into the countryside,’ Surin Pitsuwan said. In fact the Burmese government was sending out strong signals long before that left few in any doubt that the top brass were embarrassed by the TCG operation, as in affect it gave the impression the government could not deal with the situation. In February 2009, the Burmese chairman of the TCG and then Deputy Foreign Minister, Kyaw Thu, was kicked upstairs and effectively released of his responsibilities in the TCG [...]. Noeleen Heyzer [ESCAP head] told

delegates at a forum in Bangkok to review the lessons learned from post-Nargis operations. Lessons were learned though, Heyzer insisted. The key ones were the need for leadership, partnership and trust, she explained. In particular, she stressed the need to work with civil society and the people in the affected communities. Ironically, as the only representative of local Burmese NGOs at the conference, Soe Tin was barred from speaking. ‘We should have been heard, we are on the ground, we are dealing with the people on a daily basis, we have the best insight into the real problems,’ he told The Irrawaddy. What is needed next time is a swifter response, Heyzer said. And she appealed to the international community not to just provide funds for the relief stage, but to commit to the early recovery phase equally generously. ‘What a white-wash,’ a European diplomat who attended the meeting told The Irrawaddy, adding, ‘It’s all about back slapping and image. ‘A realistic assessment of what was spent, what impact it has had, and what could have made the process more effective is still needed,’ he said.

(Source: “Burma Dashes Asean and UN Hopes of Disaster Cooperation”, *The Irrawaddy*, 1 September 2010)¹⁴⁶

Although there has been a marginal improvement in natural disaster aversions since Nargis, sadly, Giri shows that it was not enough. Mismanagement of natural disasters is still occurring in inexcusable ways. In Arakan State no comprehensive DRR has been implemented in the last decade, exposing the population time and again to the lethal forces of nature, as we will now hear.

SECTION 5: VOICES FROM ARAKAN STATE - FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This and the next section present the major findings of the fieldwork, where appropriate excerpts of interviews (contained in Annex I) will illustrate the points made. This section starts with an assessment of the death toll as well as the damage caused by the cyclone as recorded by independent local sources and compared to the official figures.

A major *raison d’être* of this report is to question the misinformation given by official sources and INGOs under government control as our fieldwork and anecdotal evidence from numerous sources strongly suggest much higher figures. We also wish to highlight the need for future planning for natural disasters as well as assist those whose lives have been affected by cyclones Nargis and Giri.

Due to space constraints it was unfeasible to include all of the figures and descriptions of the loss in human lives and physical damage in every village, which have been recorded by our fieldworkers. However, we will include a sample of all the figures available for one township and for one village to demonstrate the nature of the raw data collected.

The long awaited general election of 7 November 2010 came shortly after Cyclone Giri, however, the authorities refused to postpone the election in the worst hit areas. We will attempt to answer the questions whether the authorities used the relief to influence the election results in the affected areas and whether there was interference by the authorities of the relief effort including misappropriation of relief goods. We conclude this section with a discussion to establish whether both the media and the democratic opposition parties inside as well as outside Burma largely ignored Cyclone Giri and its devastating consequences.

5.1 Impact of Cyclone Giri

“The cyclone caused slight loss and damage and a few casualties.”

The New Light of Myanmar, 25 October 2010¹⁴⁷

The state run media in Burma have for decades been a mouthpiece of the generals ruling the country. **Table 5.1** below compares the official death toll¹⁴⁸ and the numbers provided by local relief workers, survivors and reported in non-state media.¹⁴⁹ Because there is a large discrepancy between the numbers reported by the different sources, there exists an unclear picture of Giri’s true impact that is difficult to resolve in favour of official accounts, given the regime’s historical record.

Table 5.1: Death Toll

Date	Official Sources (people)	Non-official Sources (people)
26/10/2010	27 ¹⁵⁰	84 ¹⁵¹
27/10/2010	-	>100 ¹⁵²
29/10/2010	45 ¹⁵³	>100 ¹⁵⁴
02/11/2010	45 ¹⁵⁵	157 ¹⁵⁶
18/11/2010	45 ¹⁵⁷	165 ¹⁵⁸
26/04/2011	45 ¹⁵⁹	-
01/10/2011		259 ¹⁶⁰

The official figures given are much lower.¹⁶¹ Some observers say that is because the junta wanted to hide the real extent of the disaster so as not to expose themselves to international criticism before the election.¹⁶² Furthermore, as in previous disasters, there were many undocumented deaths¹⁶³ as government officials and many organisations did not go to many of the remote areas where our fieldworkers reached. Local sources confirm that the breakdown of the deaths from Cyclone Giri amongst the four worst hit townships was as follows (see **Table 5.2**):

Table 5.2: Fatalities by Township

Township	Fatalities
Mraybon	232
Pauktaw	14
Marmbra	11
Kyaukphru	2
Total	259

The above figures only refer to the four townships that were worst affected and where field research could be carried out. Due to security issues, transport and communication difficulties and limited resources there are many cyclone affected areas which could not be reached to verify the number of deaths. Consequently, the total number of deaths across the whole of Arakan State caused by Cyclone Giri is higher than this figure and is estimated to be in excess of 300.¹⁶⁴

Table 5.3 further breaks down the death toll in Mraybon Township by village.¹⁶⁵

Table 5.3: Sample: Details of Death Toll in Mraybon Township by Village

No.	Township	Village- Tract/ Town	Village	No. of deaths
1.	Mraybon	Ah Ngu	Ah Ngu Ywar Thit	1
2.	Mraybon	Ah Ngu	Kyauk Maw Gyi	2
3.	Mraybon	Chaung Kya	Pin Khar	3
4.	Mraybon	Kyun Thar Yar	Chaung Wa	1
5.	Mraybon	Kha Yan Pyin	Kha Yan Pyin	1
6.	Mraybon	Laung Da Reik	Ah Myet Htwet	5
7.	Mraybon	Laung Da Reik	Thay Chaung	3
8.	Mraybon	Moe Thee Nat Taung	Kon Baung (South)	4
9.	Mraybon	Moe Thee Nat Taung	Kyee Gaung Taung	11
10.	Mraybon	Moe Thee Nat Taung	Taung Gyi Yin (Moe Thee Nat Taung)	7
11.	Mraybon	Nga Shwe Pyin	Nga Shwe Pyin	1
12.	Mraybon	Nga Shwe Pyin	Nga Shwe Pyin (North)	1
13.	Mraybon	Nyaung Khet Kan	Nyaung Khet Kan (Ywar Haung)	5
14.	Mraybon	Nyaung Khet Kan	Nyaung Khet Kan (Ywar Thit)	3

15.	Mraybon	Ohn Chaung	Ohn Chaung	20
16.	Mraybon	Ohn Chaung	Pyin Wan	60
17.	Mraybon	Pauk Tu Taung	Pauk Tu Taung	5
18.	Mraybon	Pyayt Chaung	Min Chaung	11
19.	Mraybon	Pyin Chaung	Pyin Chaung	1
20.	Mraybon	Shauk Chon	Kyant Hin Khar	1
21.	Mraybon	Shauk Chon	Kyar Inn Taung	2
22.	Mraybon	Sin Kyat	Shin Taung	1
23.	Mraybon	Taung Shey	Taung Shey (Lower)	1
24.	Mraybon	Wa Baw Gyi	Wa Baw Gyi	30
25.	Mraybon	Yae Gaung Chaung	Taung Zaing	3
26.	Mraybon	Yae Ni Gyi	Thin Paung Chaung	1
27.	Mraybon	Yae Ni Gyi	Yae Ni Gyi	10
28.	Mraybon	Yae Shin	Yae Shin	2
29.	Mraybon	Yoe Sa Nwin	Maung Chaung	3
30.	Mraybon	Yoe Sa Nwin	Nat Hla	1
31.	Mraybon	Kyaung Taung	Cheit Taung	2
32.	Mraybon	Kywe Tet	Kywe Tet	1
33.	Mraybon	May Lun	May Lun	1
34.	Mraybon	Zin Yin Maw	Zin Yin Maw	6
35.	Mraybon		Lat Pan Kaing	1
36.	Mraybon		Myi Thar Yar	6
37.	Mraybon		Toe Choung	6
38.	Mraybon		Yon Koung Maw	1
39.	Mraybon		Ywar Thit	1
40.	Mraybon		Htoo Chay	1
41.	Mraybon		Doe Poe	5
42.	Mraybon		Kayan Gyi	1
			Total	232

Many villagers also faced a shortage of clean water as the tidal surge created by the cyclone had overrun the embankments contaminating the drinking water ponds with sea water. In some places, such as Taung Yin Gyi Village, Ngapi Pyin Village and Kant Belu Village, *Mraybon Township*, the villagers suffered and some died from acute diarrhoea due to contaminated drinking water.¹⁶⁶ In Kyaukphe Township four people died of diarrhoea.¹⁶⁷ The survivors also fell victim to other illnesses caused by malnutrition due to food shortages and poor quality food.

We interviewed a man from Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township, who said that there was no medicine available when people were ill. He lost his appetite and felt depressed due to the cyclone. Although there was an army clinic,¹⁶⁸ most villagers were afraid to go there and preferred to buy medicine from the local shop if donors gave them money (see interview excerpt 4 in Annexure I).

One aspect of the impact of natural disasters on the affected community that is often overlooked is the psychological damage such a great loss can cause.¹⁶⁹ This was, however, also identified by the *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis* (IA RTE) as a potential gap in relief assistance: the severe stress in communities realising just how vulnerable they are if another cyclone strikes.¹⁷⁰ In the aftermath of Cyclone Giri many people were suffering from post-traumatic stress and at least 2 men, *U Aung Kyaw Sein* and the other unknown, both from Mraybon Township, committed suicide by hanging.¹⁷¹ None of our interviewees mentioned that any psychological care was provided, either by the government or the INGOs.¹⁷²

Additionally, OCHA stated in its situation reports that 101,923 people were left homeless and a total of 260,000 were affected by Cyclone Giri.¹⁷³ However, local sources suggest that the impact was actually

far worse than these official statistics,¹⁷⁴ with as many as 240,000 people thought to be homeless and a total number of approximately 1,000,000 people affected in total.¹⁷⁵ Thousands of pigs, cattle and poultry also died. According to the *World Food Programme* (WFP) the losses in the four hardest hit townships were (see **Table 5.4**). This greatly affected many peoples livelihoods and food intake.

Table 5.4: Livestock killed in Kyaukphru, Marmbra, Mraybon and Pauktaw

Livestock Killed	Chickens	Ducks	Goats	Pigs	Cattle
	55%	41%	29%	21%	12%

(Source: WFP Food Security Assessment in Four Townships affected by Cyclone Giri)¹⁷⁶

According to local sources and OCHA the cyclone caused the following damage to infrastructure (see **Table 5.5**):

Table 5.5: Infrastructural Damage by Township

Township	Houses		Total	Schools	Shrimp Farms	paddy fields in acres (ha)	Fishing boats	Monasteries
	town	village						
Mraybon	2,154	15,067	17,221	101	10,872	11,953 (4,837)	1,482	43
Pauktaw	938	12,974	13,912	17	13,377	11,128 (4,503)	237	12
Marmbra	132	4,667	4,799	57	-	5,436 (2,200)	-	-
Kyaukphru	2,683	9,333	12,016	2	70	15,123 (6120)	82	-
Subtotal	5,907	42,365		179			1,801	55
TOTAL	47,948				24,319	43,640(17,660)		
OCHA	20,380 *1			150	* 2	262,320 (106,157)	1,817	-

(The figures¹⁷⁷ refer to totally destroyed infrastructure. Figures of partially destroyed infrastructure have to be added to get a comprehensive idea of the devastation)

*1: OCHA mentions a total of 52,000 households that are damaged and destroyed.¹⁷⁸

*2 In its situation reports OCHA refers to the damage to shrimp farms and aquaculture ponds only in terms of acreage – recording a total figure of 50,000 acres (20,234 ha).¹⁷⁹

40-50% of farming areas over Arakan state were no longer harvestable according to UNDP.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, many salt pans/farms were damaged during the cyclone, causing widespread contamination to farmland. Additionally, ponds and wells in approximately 70 villages, with a population of about 40,000, were contaminated with seawater,¹⁸¹ resulting in a lack of clean drinking water. Official reports acknowledge that approximately 150 schools were (heavily) damaged, while another 200 schools were partially damaged.¹⁸²

About 10 miles (16 kilometres) north of Kyaukphru is Yaynantaung, home to about 2,000 small family owned oil wells. Cyclone Giri damage brought the 100 years old local drilling industry, to a standstill.¹⁸³

According to the *Kyaukphru Township Peace and Development Council* the total damage from the storm amounted to 2.34 billion kyats (approximately US\$2.34 million).¹⁸⁴ One source mentions that in total about \$30 million worth of damage had been done.¹⁸⁵ Table 5.6 shows the damage in Htoo Chay Village, Mraybon Township¹⁸⁶ and is an example of what many villages have suffered.

Table 5.6: Sample: Details of Damage in Htoo Chay Village, Mraybon Township

No.	Description	Deaths/damage
	Total Population: 665 (309 men & 356 women)	1
1.	Total Number of Houses: 171 Large fishing nets	171 totally damaged 21

2.	Medium fishing nets	17
3.	Motor boat for village use	3
4.	Big fishing boats	32
5.	Small fishing boats	43
6.	Plantation garden of rubber, Dha-nyun, ¹⁸⁷ mangoes, Pangae trees, ¹⁸⁸ etc.	40 acres (16 ha)
7.	Pigs	38
8.	Village clinic	1
9.	Drinking ponds	2
10.	Monastery	1

5.2 Relief Efforts

“We [...] provided the necessary assistances to the [Giri] victims and they reached under shelter within 24 hours.”

Ye Myint Aung, Ambassador of Myanmar on the DRR Global Platform, Geneva, 9-13 May 2011¹⁸⁹

In the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Giri, the survivors faced constant shortages of food and clean water and many could not even eat rice every day. While (I)NGOs provided emergency relief, it was intermittent, due to the junta's interference and logistical difficulties. However, the survivors made it clear from the beginning: from the assistance they wanted not just food, but foremost rebuilding their livelihood. When interviewed, a man from Ngarachai village, Pauktaw Township, gave the following answer (see interview excerpt 4 in Annexure I):

Q: What about food now? How do you manage to survive now?

A: *If we have donors, we have food. But it's really difficult to get food without regular donors. We really want to live and survive through our own work.*

Some were forced rely on eating rice porridge and coconut, instead of rice, and to drink coconut water.¹⁹⁰ The state media reported that on 24 October specialists from *Yangon People's Hospital* under the *Ministry of Health* were sent to clinics in the worst hit townships.¹⁹¹

INGOs and UN agencies, such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), *UNICEF*, WFP, IFRC and many others were ready to access the affected areas on 23 October, but their foreign relief experts had to wait for days to obtain clearance from authorities to access the worst affected areas.¹⁹² Only some CBOs and local NGOs could reach the survivors shortly after the cyclone¹⁹³ while the SPDC were still slow to accept offers of assistance from some foreign countries, notably the US.¹⁹⁴

The small amount of relief supplies provided by the government was mainly limited to basic foodstuffs, some cooking pots and tents. Materials to enable people to rebuild their homes or their farms or to repair fishing boats and nets were in very short supply. Although they were severely hit themselves, Kyaukpghru residents reported that they had sent rice and drinking water to people in Mraybon township. On 27 October there were reports of the price of rice and roofing material rising because of high demand.¹⁹⁵

When interviewed, a 47 year-old fisherman from Prumwun Village, Mraybon Township, confirmed having received some rice and roofing material, but it was only for a few weeks. He confirmed that he and his family have insufficient money to replace lost fishing equipment and there is no government or NGO support. Therefore he has no means to make an income, so could not send his children to school. This is a cause for shame and worries¹⁹⁶ (see interview excerpt 5 in Annexure I), and can cause long-term mental hardship.

An elderly interviewee from Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township, explained that although the government was aware that in his village all but a few houses had been destroyed, they did not receive

any support. The Western Commander, *Soe Thein*, had informed them that he would provide 300,000 bamboos and other relief goods, however, nothing was supplied (see interview excerpt 8 in Annexure I).

Even when temporary shelters were provided by the government or INGO's, the devastated cyclone victims were threatened with having to pay large amounts in compensation if they damaged the shelter in some way: in the same village, Kahntoutgree Village, Mraybon Township, both a fisherman and a farmer each declared during an interview that they had received a tent from the army. In case of damage to the tent, compensation has to be paid to the army or the UN to the tune of 350,000 – 450,000 kyat (\$350-450) i.e. more than a year's average income¹⁹⁷ (see interview excerpts 6 & 7 in Annexure I).

In the aftermath of Cyclone Giri the junta appeared more focused on campaigning for the 7 November election than on relief efforts for the victims.¹⁹⁸ On 24 October 2010 Prime Minister *U Thein Sein* delivered a speech on the 65th anniversary of UN founding day - just two days after Cyclone Giri. He talked about Cyclone Nargis, but made no comment on Cyclone Giri¹⁹⁹ and made no response when the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator (HC) in Rangoon said that the international community was ready and willing to help cyclone victims.²⁰⁰ As a matter of fact, for the victims events then took an even *more sinister turn* (see **Box 5.1**).

Box 5.1: Consequences of Junta telling the UN to keep the Humanitarian Operation “low profile”

“[S]imilar to Nargis, international staff and new INGOs were not allowed to visit the area until nearly 2 months after (mid December). Cyclone Giri hit an impoverished and politically sensitive area 2 weeks before national elections. The Government asked the UN to keep a humanitarian operation ‘low profile’. Thus the Humanitarian Coordinator (simultaneously the Resident Coordinator) requested the implementation of an ‘informal’ cluster system in Yangon. Thirteen days after Giri, when more information became available regarding the extent of damage and persons affected (260,000), the cluster system was officially activated with a letter sent to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Seventeen days later application was made to the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) and a month later a general appeal made to donors (22 Nov). [...] The ‘low profile’ approach to the disaster made a more transparent humanitarian operation difficult, resulting in delays in information, funding and action. It also had an impact on what to expect from clusters in terms of their normal roles and responsibilities.[...] On 1 November, the RC/HC wrote to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Valerie Amos requesting to formally activate the clusters. [...] According to OCHA and the RC/HC, the difference between informal clusters and formal activation was artificial and in fact was only a ‘normal delay’. However it did cause some confusion among cluster coordinator agencies, NGOs and donors. The delay or initial convening ‘informally’ had several impacts; a) per donors it sent the message that the magnitude of the disaster did not require additional resources for coordination and therefore was not that severe, b) some NGOs were not sure if it was then necessary to participate in clusters and some did not start until several weeks later, c) without an appeal no resources can be mobilised to fund additional coordination capacity, d) many lead agencies did not dedicate full time cluster coordinators but instead used existing staff, and e) the cluster coordinators, in the case of IFRC, reduced their terms of reference to a bare minimum. When the cluster became ‘activated’ the [terms of reference] were not reviewed or revised, which later left some members/stakeholders with unmet expectations particularly in the area of strategy development and resource mobilisation.”

(Source: Kerren Hedlund, “*Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation: Cyclone Giri Response*”, July 2011)²⁰¹

This official inhumane indifference²⁰² led to crucial delays in emergency relief and medical care reaching cyclone victims. This was further exacerbated by the logistical difficulties of reaching the remotest parts of Arakan State following the damage to infrastructure caused by the cyclone.

Additionally, the authorities restricted the movements and activities of international and local relief agencies. All donors were advised that assistance could only be delivered through their military units.²⁰³

The local NGOs were asked to work under the management of township authorities and their freedom of access to the victims was limited.

A Cyclone Giri survivor from Pauktaw Town tells how in Mraybon Township some INGO workers refused to supply victims under army supervision and left without giving any support (see interview excerpt 16 in Annexure I).

At the international level, the Giri disaster funding was deliberately weakened: the *International Federation of the Red Cross* (IFRC) did not make a funding appeal at the request of the MRCS²⁰⁴ and neither a UN *Flash Appeal*²⁰⁵ nor *Consolidated Appeal*²⁰⁶ was launched for funding for Cyclone Giri victims.²⁰⁷ That same year the UN *Flash Appeals* for Haiti (\$0.57bn) and Pakistan (\$0.46bn) were 100% funded within 35 and 44 days respectively; they eventually raised \$3.5bn and \$2.6bn.²⁰⁸ One year on, only \$21.65m (38% of Giri's required \$0.05bn) has been pledged²⁰⁹ - 0.3 % of the 2010 grand total of the world's contributions for natural disasters.²¹⁰

Contrary to the claims of the Burmese ambassador, *Ye Myint Aung*, in the *Global Platform for DRR* in Geneva, it's physically impossible to reach all the destroyed villages in one day, not to mention providing shelters and materials.

Only 3,547 households (17.7%) had received emergency shelter within 6 months.²¹¹ Ritual standard phrases such as the government "*providing the necessary assistance*" or "*fulfilled the needs*"²¹² are only the visible face of the official cover up, whereas on the ground level little is being done.

Local Action

There is no evidence that the government spent any significant time or money on relief or recovery from the cyclone and the lack of transparency left the door open to theft, corruption and siphoning off of funds.²¹³ Official reports of the government assistance extent and/or impact have never been made public. Funding the recovery is almost solely done by donor countries despite Burma bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars in annual natural gas sales.²¹⁴ Official media²¹⁵ lists all the things the authorities have done and distributed, but they are predominantly taking the credit for what local groups and NGOs did. Relief efforts were made by some GO-NGOs (Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation)²¹⁶ or, for instance, the *Inland Water Transport* (IWT) which made it possible for local or international donors who wanted to transport relief supplies to hire ships.²¹⁷

However, the real first responders were the thousands of ordinary Burmese who went on their own initiative to support their fellow citizens. Instantaneously and from all backgrounds, monks, business people, youths, doctors, and others, collected food and clothes from their communities and took it to aid the survivors from the day the cyclone struck. For instance, the Rangoon-based *Arakan Friends Association* reported on the day of the disaster that public transport was unavailable to travel from Rangoon to Arakan because of the traditional *Thadingyut Festival*.²¹⁸ This Spontaneous community action highlights the generosity of the Burmese citizens and deeply contrasts the actions of the government: who should be the ones supporting its people.

Just like after Nargis, some of these initiatives became more organised and some communities formed their own CBOs.²¹⁹ Many Burmese abroad returned to the country to bring donations. Migrant workers and their families in Thailand, Singapore, the US, Europe and Australia started to send money and supplies.²²⁰ Some businesses became local donors: the local rice traders' association in one of the hardest hit townships agreed to sell bags of rice at a discount to cyclone victims.²²¹ But when these local relief groups and donors started to give support to the survivors, the SPDC reasserted control through checkpoints (e.g. more than five from Kyaukphehu to Rangoon)²²² and close monitoring of aid.

Relief Camps

In the week after the cyclone struck, the local authorities set up rescue camps. The NLM (New Light of Myanmar) reported on 27 October that there was a rescue camp in Mraybon in the *Basic Education*

High School and a relief and rehabilitation camp in Kyunthaya Village;²²³ one day later it was reported that there were nine makeshift rescue camps in storm-hit townships.²²⁴ In Kyaukphehu there was a camp in the *Myoma* sports ground²²⁵; three temporary camps were set up by the MRCS (Myanmar Red Cross Society) and the RSWM in Kyaukphehu:²²⁶ two in monasteries and one in *Basic Education High School One*. The victims were given food by residents, and authorities also distributed relief supplies such as blankets.²²⁷

According to the MRCS 17 temporary relief camps housed more than 5600 families, i.e. 28,000 survivors, after the storm, but on 27 October that number had fallen to 2000, or 10,000 survivors. On 28 October the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were moved into a relief camp established on the *Myoma* football pitch in Kyaukphehu, where township authorities provided food, healthcare and 10 yards (9.1 metres) of tarpaulin and 100 bamboo poles for each house.²²⁸ 200 tents were erected by the MRCS, each tent measuring about 100 square feet (9.3 m²) and catering for 10 people, or two families.²²⁹ The MRCS also installed latrines and a Restoring Family Links (RFL) team visited four camps in Maybon Township.²³⁰ On 9 November the *Myanmar Information Management Unit* (MIMU) reported that 25,000 IDPs (5,000 households) were still in camps.²³¹ We received numerous complaints by survivors about receiving little or no relief from the government. According to our informants, unequal distribution of relief happened for various reasons including: (1) different places received different amounts of aid; (2) (I)NGOs were more able to access the towns as opposed to the villages; (3) logistical, infrastructural (no roads, bridges washed away, only waterways) and transport reasons;²³² (4) security reasons (e.g. the army did not readily allow expats to move outside the towns); (5) voter favouritism (to get votes people who were influential got relief from USDP and wherever there had been campaign promises or incentives, people got more aid); and (6) local cultural customs. It was unclear to many recipients who donated the relief, as the authorities, including the army distributed goods that had been donated by (I)NGOs so people could not differentiate.

5.3 Misappropriation of Aid

“Many donors had become wary of the official neglect that had hindered response to previous disasters. And if the junta allowed INGOs to spend money on relief, it took credit for and advantage of it.”

Human Rights Watch, 29 March 2011²³³

Post-Nargis, one lesson seemed to have been learned by the junta:

“The Emergency Supply Supervisory Committee consisting of departmental officials and non-governmental organizations is accepting and systematically keeping proper accounts of the cash and relief aid donated by internal and international donor????????s. Anyone may inform if he witnesses or knows that the cash assistance and relief supplies donated to the storm victims are kept for self-interest, traded, used for particular persons and organizations, or misappropriated for other purposes. We hereby announce that we have made all necessary arrangements to conduct investigation into the cases to expose the offenders and take punitive action against them in accordance with the law.”²³⁴

However, there are reports that officials diverted aid: for their own military units, for profiteering, or to favour certain communities. Mentioned above, there exist roadblocks and river checkpoints manned by soldiers demanding “tax” and the prevalence of military extortion.²³⁵ The tax may be in cash or kind. In practice this means that relief money and goods including food has ended up in the hands of the authorities rather than the victims.²³⁶ Also noted is the practice of the setting up controls on the relief flows²³⁷, which frequently include “fees” to access disaster areas. A new *Withholding Tax* was introduced on 1 January 2011. It was reported that this new tax system would not only disturb (I)NGOs in their project implementation, but also hinder the emergency relief efforts.²³⁸

Many people accused the government of exploiting survivors for propaganda purposes by pretending to deliver assistance to the victims. The authorities have been videotaped and photographed delivering aid

items to the victims,²³⁹ but, according to many local sources, later the materials and foodstuffs provided were confiscated from the recipients.²⁴⁰ A good example was the visit on 23 October of Transportation minister *U Thein Swe*, RSW minister *U Maung Muang Swe*, and deputy Home minister *U Phone Swe* to Kyaukphru township.²⁴¹ The state media reported on and showed pictures of the ministers distributing aid, only for the local authorities to confiscate the donated materials after the ministers had left the area.²⁴²

One of the interviewees from Mraybon Township spoke about tarpaulins that had initially been provided as temporary tents, but after one night they were taken back. During his visit the Western Commander, *Soe Thein*, admonished them (see interview excerpt 9 in Annexure I):

“Is there any possibility to make bricks with which you can build buildings and live there? Only then you can be protected from natural disaster of cyclones.”

One local relief worker reported that *U Aung Kyaw Zaw*, Kyaukphru DPDC chairman, pulled the same propaganda stunt: he was videotaped handing out pots and pans to cyclone survivors on Kyaukphru football field, only for the items to be taken back once the camera stopped rolling. A local woman responded angrily, pelting him with packs of candles and dried noodles.²⁴³

Déjà vu? This happened after Nargis and it happened again after Giri:

“[...] a local official gathered 15 survivors to meet Major General Myint Swe, who was inspecting the area. After authorities filmed the Major General giving relief supplies to the 15 people, the local official returned in the evening and took back the supplies. Also during the week following the cyclone, soldiers [...] filmed themselves distributing aid, and then took back the goods when they were finished filming.” (“Human rights concerns a month after Cyclone Nargis”, *Amnesty International*)²⁴⁴

It is also claimed that some authorities, who were supposedly leading the relief efforts, diverted aid items for their personal benefit. *U Moe Kyaw*, the chairman of Taung-Yin Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township, and *U Soe Naing*, the chairman of Kyaukphru East-ward administration diverted emergency food relief and sold it in the market. *U Moe Kyaw* re-sold sacks of rice for 15,000 kyats (US\$15) each.²⁴⁵ Townspeople in Sitetway reported that many donated relief goods have been flooding the markets as local authorities are smuggling them out to sell.²⁴⁶ Some middlemen also siphoned off NGO donations, forcing people to tell the authorities that they received all the items.²⁴⁷

A man from Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township, related how the village organised a lottery because there were not sufficient relief goods to go round as most items had been lost on the way to the village. Instead of distributing the relief directly and equally to the villagers, the donors including the *Western Commander*, deposited the goods in the village headman’s house, who misappropriated a part of the relief. In conclusion, the interviewee thought that the distribution is “*just for show, since it was not distributed to people equally*” (see interview excerpt 10 in Annexure I).

Some heads of the *Ya Ya Ka* have clearly been selling donated rice and some witnesses said up to 50% of the relief has been misappropriated by local village authorities for profit.²⁴⁸ Others are also the local leader of the *kyaing-phut* which meant that they received more support from the authorities and that they could channel more relief to cronies or use it to influence voters.

5.4 2010 General Election

“The official response to the cyclone and cooperation with the international community was subordinated to ensuring that the vote went ahead as planned throughout the country, with as little international presence as possible.”

Human Rights Watch²⁴⁹

The “*Nargis Referendum*” would turn out to be the dress rehearsal of the “*Giri election*”.

This was the first election in Burma in 20 years and would be held at all costs. It was the fifth step – “*Holding of free and fair elections for Pyithu Hluttaws according to the new constitution*” - of the

regime's seven-step "*roadmap to discipline-flourishing democracy*",²⁵⁰ and so energy was focused on this rather than minimising the damage of Giri.

The election took place on 7 November, 16 days after Cyclone Giri struck. When the date was announced three months earlier,²⁵¹ the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology's (DMH) head, *Tun Lwin*, had also announced that *La Niña* would bring heavy rains and flooding around November. The two cyclone seasons in Burma are always in May and October-November, hence, the junta knowingly chose these periods for the constitutional referendum (10 May 2008, 8 days after Cyclone Nargis) and the election (7 November 2010).²⁵²

Voters could cast their ballots in advance or on the day of polling. In Arakan State, there were 81 polling stations for 9 townships. Coercion of the advance voting was the main method of fraud used as the secrecy of these votes was not guaranteed nor had the procedures to manage them been made clear.²⁶³ The elections were both for the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* and for the (Arakan) *State Hluttaw*. The *Union Solidarity and Development Association* (USDA) had metamorphosed into the USDP and was the main government-backed party. In the Arakan *State Hluttaw* the USDP came second after the RNDP – the only 1 of 14 states/regions where the USDP did not come first.²⁵⁴

The RNDP wrote to the *Union Election Commission* (UEC) requesting that polling be postponed for a month in the three most cyclone affected townships.²⁵⁵ The RNDP claimed that holding elections in the most damaged areas would not be fair, as the voters were suffering and focused on trying to rebuild their lives, finding new homes or simply feeding themselves, rather than voting. They cited the precedent of Cyclone Nargis, which had occurred just eight days before voting on a referendum to approve the constitution in 2008. In that instance, the junta had delayed voting by two weeks in the worst hit areas.²⁵⁶ However, the UEC ignored the plea and proceeded with the election on 7 November, the same day as in the rest of the country.

In other aspects, Nargis was indeed a precedent: high officials exploited the relief for electioneering purposes. The then Prime Minister and chairman of the USDP, *U Thein Sein*, visited some of the affected areas ten days after the cyclone. However, his main aim appeared to be canvassing for his party instead of overseeing the relief and rebuilding efforts for cyclone victims. During a public meeting on 3 November 2010 with local people and local authorities at *Yammawaddy Hall* in Kyaukphe, rather than listening to the survivors' hardship, *U Thein Sein* encouraged them to vote for the USDP:

*"People should behave like good citizens and go to the polling station on election day...they should clearly tick right in the middle of the box next to [his] party's Lion symbol."*²⁵⁷

In Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township, a man explained in an interview how the government had told the villagers to vote: they had to claim that their "*eyesight is not good*" and thus give the ballot papers to the government workers at the ballot box. And if the villager had made the wrong choice, the ballot would be destroyed (see interview excerpt 12 in Annexure I).

Voter coercion

Many votes are invalid due to the wrongful ways local officials acquired them. In some cases the authorities forced the villagers to vote for the government-backed USDP in exchange for receiving food and other relief,²⁵⁸ or, officials threatened to cut aid to victims if they failed to vote for the USDP.²⁵⁹

In another incident, Pauktaw TPDC chairman collected advanced votes from the cyclone survivors of Ingrachai Island and threatened that officials would stop providing relief assistance to them if they did not vote for the government party.²⁶⁰ A similar threat was made by the Mraybon Township authorities to cyclone victims who were told that they would only continue to receive aid if they voted for the USDP.²⁶¹

A female interviewee from Thunganut Village, Marmbra Township, shared her views on who received support and why: those who gave advance votes to the USDP received quite a lot of support from the government or USDP (see interview excerpt 11 in Annexure I).

The owners of salt farms were told that their land would be confiscated if they did not vote for the USDP.²⁶² *Ya Ya Ka* (the village Council) and ward heads told the voters to vote for the USDP if they wanted relief aid²⁶³ and relief supplies have reportedly effectively been cut because the villagers failed to collectively vote for the USDP.²⁶⁴ Relief had to be distributed through the *Ya Ya Ka*, however, the chairmen refused to distribute to non-USDP members when they came to the chairmen's houses to collect relief supplies. Higher authorities were aware of this exploitation, but ignored it because they needed USDP votes.²⁶⁵ Even the *Western Commander* told the elders and the villagers to vote for the USDP. If they did not, they would not receive any provisions.²⁶⁶

Despite all the coercion the USDP lost the election in Arakan state. Retribution was swift: villagers suspected of voting for the NDPD were reportedly arrested or fined.²⁶⁷ In Pauktaw Township, in retaliation the irrigation authorities destroyed an embankment that was constructed to prevent salt water from entering paddy fields in Kan Chaung Village, causing damage to 1,000 acres (405 ha) of paddy fields.²⁶⁸ Prior to the election, the village authorities and leaders of the USDP had threatened to do this if the villagers did not vote for their party.

In another case, the authorities suspended relief assistance in Wa-Khaung Village of Mraybon Township and told the villagers “*go and ask for aid from the party you did vote for*”.²⁶⁹ In Paikseik Village of Kyaukphru Township 300 names were removed from the assistance recipients list because they had failed to vote for the government-backed party.²⁷⁰ Relief workers told us that similar cases of withholding relief assistance from the cyclone victims occurred in many villages of Kyaukphru, Mraybon, Pauktaw, Marmbra, Rambray, Ponnagywan, and Sitetway townships.

Nargis was also a precedent as far as the regime's paranoia regarding the international presence was concerned: the UN reported that the SPDC banned Nargis-related visas for humanitarian workers in August 2010 and told the INGOs that the recovery effort should be “*mainstreamed into development programmes*”, requiring new MOUs, leading to 90 INGO staff with uncertain visa status and negative consequences for the people in need of continued assistance. Fears that foreigners may enter Burma to observe the election was the rationale for banning the visas.²⁷¹

From the accounts of survivors, it is clear that the “*Giri election*” was not conducted in a free and fair manner, just like the “*Nargis referendum*”. While the government frets over votes, the survivors are continuing to struggle to survive: the election process only complicated their efforts to find food, housing, and potable water as the authorities diverted most resources to their election. Many affected areas in Arakan were neglected by the government due to their bad election results.²⁷² NGOs observed that the government-backed USDP had been distributing rice to victims before the election; however, after the election the party and relief supplies were nowhere to be seen.²⁷³

5.5 Weak Media Coverage

“if it bleeds, it leads”

“in the case of starvation, no airtime on this station”

“we know that all of those corporations who are the world media's sponsors, are the same one's jockeying to get a piece of the high profits which are based on Burmese slave labour.”

Garrett reacting to Lawi Weng, “Cyclone Giri Victims Short of Food”, The Irrawaddy, 22 December 2010

In 2008 Nargis set a clear precedent in many respects for what would happen after Giri, but a major difference that left Giri victims even more neglected was the media coverage and the amount of aid donated. Andrew Kirkwood (Save the Children Myanmar director) compared the amount of media coverage and the huge outpouring of international assistance after Cyclone Nargis with Giri, which was

exactly the opposite, and because of the weak media coverage he said it was “very, very difficult to raise funding”.

Earlier a link had been shown between media exposure and fundraising for natural disasters in 2010, for instance, the ten-fold disparity between the early contributions for the Haiti earthquake and the Pakistani floods.

“Assistance [is] hampered by limited media attention and private charitable giving. The negligible media attention in the English-language press is certainly a factor in the limited support for flood victims from private individuals, foundations and corporations.”

Just like the run up to the referendum after Nargis, the official media showed the authorities as running the relief effort in the run up to the election with MRTV and NLM covering goods being transferred from planes to trucks and high officials visiting and distributing supplies to victims. Foreign journalists were not able to cover the Giri cyclone relief as they were not granted permission to enter Burma before the elections. On 18 October UEC chairman U Thein Soe had declared that foreign journalists would not be allowed to cover the elections. Additionally, there were slowdowns, cyber attacks and tampering with the internet meaning little information got out (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Burma: Internet Enemy

“A drastic slowdown in Internet connections was noted in early October, [...], indicating the authorities’ resolve to tighten their control over information.[...]. According to Irrawaddy magazine, the capital’s cybercafés had closed in advance of the elections. This slowdown began after cyberattacks in the form of distributed denial of service (DDoS) affected several exiled Burmese media websites such as Irrawaddy and [DVB]. Just a few days prior to the legislative elections, the Burmese Internet network experienced a massive cyberattack. The attacks began around 25 October 2010 and gradually increased in number and severity, causing the country to be regularly disconnected from the Web for several days. They continued to occur until the elections were over, which made it extremely difficult for journalists and netizens to transmit videos and photos and to do their jobs. The government shifted the blame to hackers whom they claimed launched the DDoS attacks on the country, but according to Burmese sources contacted by Reporters Without Borders, most of the attacks were allegedly launched by government agents to justify cutting off the Internet. The DDoS’s were aimed at Internet service provider Myanmar Post and Telecommunications and constituted [...] an onslaught “several hundred times” more than enough to overwhelm the country’s terrestrial and satellite network. They reportedly reached 10 to 15 GB of data per second, a magnitude much greater than in the highly publicised 2007 attacks against Georgia and Estonia.”

(Source: Internet Enemies 2011- Burma, Reporters Without Borders)

To provide information, locals smuggled out information to radio and news services abroad, which did not happen on the same scale as after Nargis, which had struck the area adjacent to Rangoon, where all the correspondents are based. Hence, in comparison to the in-depth and widespread coverage which Cyclone Nargis received, Cyclone Giri was largely ignored.

The state-run media in Burma merely peddled the government’s lies in respect of the impact of the storm, while there was limited coverage among independent media outlets in other states of Burma and very little by the international media. There were attempts by local politicians and artists to draw media attention to the plight of the survivors, but they were never picked up by the international media. Although generally Arakan gets less media attention than central Burma, the timing of Cyclone Giri also contributed to this, as it was followed in quick succession by the general election, resumed fighting close to the Thai-Burma border and the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 13 November 2010.

Apart from the negative impact on fundraising, the SPDC ignored offers of assistance from foreign countries, such as Britain and the US, for several weeks. This was an exact replica of their initial response to Cyclone Nargis. However, eventually international pressure and media attention made them accept aid in the latter case. The lack of media coverage, and, consequently, the far more muted international response to Cyclone Giri facilitated the SPDC's tight control of the relief efforts for the victims.

It is vital that the tremendous challenges which cyclone survivors are still facing do not get ignored. The lack of attention does not mean that their problems are over. In fact the lack of media attention may well have had negative consequences for the cyclone victims – reduced assistance, increased exploitation of relief items, low pay, and even more serious problems such as forced conscription of child soldiers, human trafficking of girls and young women from vulnerable communities for the sex trade. International media attention for such things which local voices report would put some pressure on the junta to cease such practices, especially as they continue to try and persuade the outside world that they are moving toward democracy. That is why we recommend to the international media to continue to report on the situation in the cyclone affected areas in order to enlighten the international community on the real situation in Burma/Arakan.

5.6 Negligence of the Burmese Opposition

Arakanese parties²⁹⁷ and organisations²⁹⁸ did respond with donated aid or cash,²⁹⁹ but other ethnic nationality organisations within Burma did not. The ALD General Secretary *U Aye Tha Aung* visited some affected areas and spoke out; he was concerned by the victims' health condition as the cold season was arriving and numerous people were living in makeshift tarpaulin tents. He also said that people were afraid of getting the white tents from INGOs as they could get thrown into prison if they damaged them. He concluded that it would take 1-2 years for people to go back to their original condition.³⁰⁰ Although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi spoke out and the NLD donated approximately 14 million kyat (US\$ 14,000), her party could have raised more awareness for the cyclone victims.³⁰¹

The junta continued to restrict access to the affected areas for months after Giri. *U Phe Than*, a RNDP MP elected in Mraybon Township submitted an appeal to the Parliament and state Chief Minister on 22 April 2011, requesting permission to hold public meetings in his constituency after he was stopped from doing so by the township administrator. Six months after Giri most people were still homeless without adequate food and water, so he wanted to meet with the people to learn their situation and inform the Parliament.³⁰² The Township chairmen could block such trips under the pretext of “*preserving public tranquility*”, an arbitrary law, but used it as a valid rationale.

On 10 March 2011 both in the *Amyotha Hluttaw* and the *Pyithu Hluttaw* MPs asked questions to the ministers about the role of central government in disaster relief and rehabilitation and on the issue of inadequate rice assistance to the cyclone victims, partly because of the local authorities' corruption. However, the ministers stonewalled and the official newspaper censored the details.³⁰³ The government did announce that 65 % of damaged embankments were reconstructed.³⁰⁴

Exiled opposition groups from the Burmese democracy movement paid much less attention to Cyclone Giri than to Cyclone Nargis. The main reason for this may well be that the death toll from Nargis was much higher than Cyclone Giri. Some opposition appeals, especially from Arakanese groups inside and outside Burma, were launched, but they were not picked up by the international media, hence, they became voices shouting in a vacuum. Additionally, many organisations and campaign groups claimed that they were more focused on the release of *Daw Aung San Suu Kyi* on 13 November 2010 and the influx of refugees to Thailand in November 2011 due to border fighting between the DKBA 5th Brigade and SPDC troops.

But 2 years on the people affected by cyclone Giri are still forgotten about. The other overshadowing events have passed but the victims still remain in the same condition. Many Arakanese people believe

that attention could have been drawn to Cyclone Giri by exiled opposition groups by lobbying their regional and international contacts to put pressure on the government. For Arakan NGO and media it is a vicious circle: the lack of power of the Arakanese groups leads to little media attention, which in turn gives them less power and so less chance of helping or raising awareness and funding, which makes them even weaker to support their causes.

SECTION 6: VOICES FROM ARAKAN STATE AFTER THE CYCLONE

This last section focuses on the situation in Arakan State in the months and years after the cyclone struck. Unfortunately, to date the damage to the houses of the survivors and the infrastructure has not yet been fully repaired. In 2011 the already vulnerable population was further affected by torrential rains and flooding, exacerbating the cyclone's impact. The accumulative effect of the destruction of crops and seedlings by the cyclone and the floods has led to food shortages. The health and education situation, already at an all Burma low, has suffered even more. Overall the situation on the ground now is bad, and the minimal relief effort that was mounted after the cyclone hit, was not of a lasting nature, resulting in ongoing difficulties of rebuilding livelihoods.

6.1 Lessons to learn from Cyclone Giri

Six months after Giri struck, a UN spokesman said: *"Let's just say that there have been opportunities to learn from Nargis, also Giri [...]"* On the same occasion, however, the Myanmar Humanitarian Partnership Group report released stated that: *"the area devastated by the cyclone is still in dire need of [...] shelter, food security and livelihood"*.

"UN calls aid response to Giri 'rapid, decisive action'", Mizzima, 27 April 2011³⁰⁵

It is clear that a number of lessons have not been learned either before or after Cyclone Giri.³⁰⁶ We will highlight the situation at various stages after the cyclone struck as far as the assistance to the Giri survivors is concerned.³⁰⁷ In this section we highlight some lesser known problems that could have been approached.

○ Sub-standard INGO-constructed housing: *Build Back Better?*

"This is the cheapest shelter solution of all disasters in the world"

UN HABITAT, February 2011.

To date, most families in the affected areas have not been able to rebuild their own homes. But they have refused to accept the weak homes provided by the NGOs:

*"The cyclone victims want homes that can withstand a normal storm, but most of the homes constructed by the NGOs are not strong enough to resist a normal storm with 60 or 70-mile-per-hour [97-113 km/h] winds because they built them for under 60,000 kyats. In Arakan State, there are storms every year that hit some areas of the coast during rainy season with winds up to 60 or 70 miles per hour. Officials from NGOs first told us they'd provide homes worth 600,000 or 700,000 kyats, but this is not true [...], the value of home is only about 60,000 kyats."*³⁰⁸

The houses the NGOs actually constructed were more like tents with feeble wooden poles which would not be able to resist winds of even 25 miles per hour (40 km/h).³⁰⁹

Construction *"good for two years could cost up to \$250 per house; \$600 would buy another 6-8 years of relative stability and \$600-1,000 can build a permanent structure that will last some two decades."*³¹⁰ Relatively resilient shelters cost at least \$600 in Myanmar, and compared with \$5,000 and \$8,000 in Aceh and Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami, in other words:

"This is the cheapest shelter solution of all disasters in the world" UN HABITAT declared.³¹¹

Therefore it would be relatively cheap to build better permanent structure which would withstand future natural disasters. However shelter is seen as the government's responsibility and has been consistently one of the least funded services.³¹² OCHA head Thierry Delbreuve explained when referring to Cyclone Giri:³¹³

"Given that sub-standard housing led to the extensive damage caused by the cyclone in the first place, funding for shelter activities should be a priority in order to be prepared should another cyclone make landfall in the region. If no sustainable solutions are found, the international community needs to spend similar amounts every time a disaster hits the region."

This is the rationale behind "build back better" (BBB), however,

*"[...] the rhetoric of 'build back better' with its utopian hue, implying that countries (or parts thereof) whose physical infrastructure has been destroyed can be simply improved, as if history can be eliminated and the clock reset at year zero. Unfortunately, bad government and poorly equipped administration do not disappear after a humanitarian disaster. All their inherent limitations remain."*³¹⁴

Some survivors have preferred to rebuild their house by selling gold, buffaloes and cows³¹⁵ rather than rely on hand-outs because they want more protection and long term stability.

○ **Restriction of Movement**

To date humanitarian organisations have no freedom of movement to carry out humanitarian operations. Travel restrictions continue to hamper aid. The need for permits to transport food (and other goods), and import restrictions on equipment and vehicles remain challenges for the INGOs and there has been no change after Giri.³¹⁶

○ **"Unpaid" labour**

Unfortunately, we are aware of several instances in which government-sponsored companies used unpaid labour to rebuild infrastructure:

*"While the OCHA report details coordination between international relief agencies that includes work for pay projects, local sources report that troops from the Burmese army's Artillery Battalion³⁷⁶ and Light Infantry Battalion 270 are using cyclone victims from the devastated village of Jon Thaya as forced labor to do the cleaning up for them."*³¹⁷

The authorities threatened to withhold aid from victims of the cyclone if they did not assist with rebuilding efforts³¹⁸ and whilst it may not fit the category of *louq a pay* ("forced" labour), it was certainly "unpaid" work, bordering on illegal - if the villagers did not work, their rations were cut. Some were 'asked' to assist building projects, and those who did got some government support. A Cyclone Giri survivor from Pauktaw Township, related his experience:

"Then we heard that the Western Commander was coming to Mraybon Township. So the affected villagers were forcibly summoned to build a helipad for his arrival. Some of the villagers agreed to help build this helipad, but the majority refused to participate. Those who helped build the helipad received some relief supplies, but those who refused, were not given any relief items, not even rice or clothes, as punishment. I feel very bitter at seeing the terrible way the cyclone survivors were treated." (See interview excerpt 16 in Annexure I.)

A relief worker reported that six construction companies (Shwe Su Pan, Taw Win Thisa, Anna Wa Min, Htoo Htoo, Pyo, and TNG) had been rebuilding schools in Mraybon with government funding, which seems good on the surface but some managers used villagers as labour without paying them. Anna Wa Min Company used villagers as *louq a pay* with the help of village councils to misappropriate the wages.³¹⁹

○ **Army recruitment**

The US State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report 2011* mentions that “Subsequent to cyclone Giri in October 2010, there were verified reports of underage recruitment in cyclone-affected areas by the Burmese armed forces.”³²⁰ As many families are struggling for survival, the army has been recruiting underage soldiers in cyclone-affected areas - especially in Mraybon Township - and sent them to the *Western Command Training School No. 9*. The army recruiting team is reportedly led by *Captain Aung Thu Nyein* from *Sakhaka 5*, the *Military Operation Planning Bureau*. They prey on the students that dropped out of school to help their parents due to the post-cyclone crisis.³²¹

○ **Extortion**

The government failed to provide a budget for the embankment reconstruction and in April 2011 *Ya Ya Ka* (village council) authorities in Taung Rin, Kayin Daw, Kular Ban Taung Wra, Prin Pry, and Nga La Pwe villages, Kyaukphru Township, have turned to forcibly collecting money from farmers to fund the work. The authorities in Taung Rin Village in Kyaukphru Township have collected 3,000 kyat per acre of In short, as shown before, the education system before Giri was already very poor⁴²¹ but in the years since, things have worsened. Despite some temporary arrangements by UNICEF,⁴²² only 32% of the estimated 350 destroyed or partially damaged schools have been completely rebuilt.⁴²³

When asked during an interview about support for rebuilding destroyed schools, a teacher in Pauktaw Township replied that some corrugated iron and wood had been provided, however, not the materials for a complete reconstruction. Since this is not possible without support from the government or international organisations, most schools have not been rebuilt yet. Classes resumed thanks mainly to local donations (see interview excerpt 15 in Annexure I).

Only 3.7 % of the Rakhine students continue their higher studies⁴²⁴ and most go to Rangoon, but even if they graduate, they still cannot find a job there as qualified ethnic persons are unlikely to get high positions in state organisations, so they return to work with the parents.⁴²⁵ The cyclone destruction and subsequent lack of assistance to rebuild livelihoods has done nothing to improve this situation. paddy farm to reconstruct embankments. If they fail to pay the money the farmers have been intimidated by the village authorities into withdrawing their rights of cultivation on farms. Some farmers were unable to pay, and had to sell off parts of their farm.³²²

On 19 November the Mon SPDC ordered the VPDCs throughout Mon State to make villagers pay up to 100,000 kyat per village for Arakanese Cyclone Giri victims, but since there is no transparency or accountability, it was feared that maybe only half of the money reached them.³²³

○ **Confiscation**

In the previous section, we have mentioned the confiscation of relief goods. Some survivors hit hardest by Cyclone Giri are facing difficulties as a common creek has been confiscated by *Army battalion LIB-34* led by *Sergeant Thein Han*, resulting in 250 families losing their wealth, food and employment, i.e. over 1,100 peoples from Chaunggreephy, Shwenyoma and Rwathikekay villages, Kyaukphru Township.³²⁴ Other cases have emerged, not of direct land confiscation but of coercion toward poor people who had to sell land way under the market price so as to get money for food.

○ **Destruction of natural cyclone protection**

The construction of the deep-sea port and related oil pipe projects on Maday Island has entailed the loss of mountains (due to material extraction), mangrove forests and reefs along the coast – all natural cyclone protectors.³²⁵ Some people now fear the consequences of another natural disaster as they see their surrounding protection, such as the mountains, which greatly reduced the damage of Cyclone Giri, being destroyed for building materials and export.³²⁶

○ Weather Surveillance Radar and DMH Forecasting

Despite the ongoing damage caused by extreme weather in Burma, the government has yet to purchase an S-band Doppler digital weather surveillance radar system³²⁷, although there are already about 100 military radar stations, including on the Bay of Bengal islands.³²⁸ The folly of this was seen in March 2011 when 16,000 fishermen were caught in tropical storms in the Andaman Sea.³²⁹ The DMH forecast thunderstorms on 13-14 March 2011, but failed to anticipate the 70 mph (113 km/h) winds and the build up of the storm.³³⁰

○ Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

In the section “*Few Lessons learned from Previous Cyclones*” we pointed to all the international/ASEAN DRR “*Lessons Learned*” conferences, working groups, exercises, action plans, and agreements which the Burmese government had attended, signed, ratified or promised to implement in the decades preceding Cyclone Giri – including the post-tsunami and Nargis disasters. In 2010-2011 the government announced a number of policy decisions (see **Box 6.1**).

Box 6.1: Burma’s Policy Decisions on Disaster Risk Reduction (2010-2011)

On the *Second International Day for DRR* held in Nay Pyi Taw (13 October 2011), the Vice-President, *Sai Mauk Kham*, stated that the government:

- would continue to do its utmost to build a better disaster management mechanism;
- would link up the disaster reduction endeavours with poverty alleviation programmes so as not to hinder development tasks;
- drafted the *Myanmar Action Programme on DRR* (MAPDRR) working with the UN, the Red Cross and others;³³¹
- issued *Standing Orders on Disaster Management* in 2009;
- reorganised the *Myanmar Disaster Preparedness Agency* on 20 April 2011;
- established the *Myanmar Search and Rescue Committee* on 20 April 2011;
- the *Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Reconstruction* is drafting a *Disaster Management Act* together with the *Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre* (ADPC);
- introduced *National Building Codes*;
- would mainstream DRR in sector work such as education and health; and
- encourage local NGOs to collaborate for DRR.

Aid workers praised the regime for its speedy response to the March 2011 earthquake in Tachileik, Shan State, in contrast to the aftermath of previous disasters to strike the country, but access to the affected area was easier as it was close to the border of Thailand.³³³ But whilst the earthquake damage was being dealt with swiftly, Arakan State fell victim to another natural disaster - torrential rains and flooding - and was once again ignored by relief teams.

6.2 Torrential Rains and Flooding

“*Relief efforts in the flood-stricken region of central Burma are being hampered by intimidation and threats from township-level authorities, who consider public-run initiatives as undermining state authority.*”

Min Lwin, “Burma flood relief teams ‘threatened’”, DVB, 2 November 2011³³⁴

What has changed in the post-Giri post-military government relief assistance attitude?

Many towns and villages in Burma suffered more than usual during the torrential 2011 monsoon,³³⁵ with more than 200 deaths,³³⁶ but the situation in Arakan State was particularly alarming not only because the most severely affected area in Burma by monsoon rains is Arakan State³³⁷ – the previous year more than 60 people had died³³⁸ – but also because 2 in 3 Giri households had not yet been able to move back into their destroyed or damaged houses.³³⁹

“The rainy season in western Myanmar, which runs from June till October, is among the heaviest in the world with an average annual rainfall of 5 metres.” (UN-HABITAT)³⁴⁰

Due to torrential rains in July 2011, most of the townships in Arakan State suffered from flooding. Hundreds of homes were submerged, tens of thousands of acres of cultivated paddy farms and plantation gardens were flooded, roads and bridges were destroyed, transport was interrupted and markets and schools were closed. This led to food shortages³⁴¹ for both inhabitants and cattle. The damage has left hundreds of farmers unsure as to whether they will be able to restart their farming and rebuild their livelihoods (see **Box 6.2**).³⁴²

Box 6.2: Floods Hit Hardest on Farmers in Arakan

“[T]orrential rains [...] have destroyed tens of thousands of acres [1,000 acres = 405 ha] of paddy farms. One farmer from Kyaninkan Village [...] in Kyauktaw Township said they are facing shortages of seed and finances needed to cultivate again after all of their planted fields were lost in recent floods. [...] ‘The flood submerged our cultivated farms for three days and left all our paddy seedlings dead under mud deposits after it subsided. [...] The continual heavy rain inundated almost every area of the coastal state from 19 July, hitting the townships of Kyauktaw, Mrauk U, Munbra, Taunggok, Thandwe, and Gwa the hardest. [...] ‘There are thousands of paddy farms along the Laymro River in our area, and all paddy seedlings newly grown on the farms were dead after the cold water from the mountains came down through the river and flooded our farms,’ said the farmer. [T]he authorities are still not acting to assess the farmers’ losses or to render help with necessary seeds or funding for re-cultivating the farms.”

(Source: Narinjara, 26 July 2011)³⁴³

In July Mrauk-U broke a 33-year rainfall record of 8.90 inches (22.6 cm) with 9.37 inches (23.8 cm) of rain³⁴⁴ and Taunggoat city broke a 15-year rainfall-record of 13.07 inches (33.2 cm) with 21.90 inches (53.6 cm).³⁴⁵ In Mrauk-U there were many casualties as people struggled to take refuge in schools and monasteries. The town was cut off and boats were used to move around in the centre. Roads like the Thandway-Taungup Road, the Buthidaung-Maungdaw Road, and the Sitetway-Rangoon Road were closed; hence, bus stations in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Mubra were also closed.³⁴⁶ The water level at the Buthidaung market was 5 feet (1.5 m) high. Taungpuza and at least 20 nearby villages and Thandway and 9 nearby villages were flooded.³⁴⁷ In Kyauktaw Township 30 villages around the Thareechaung area, including Kyaninkan, Rwamapyin, Theikwapyin, Leikma, Saphothar, Kansauk, and Tharektapin villages were submerged.³⁴⁸ Building on low land was blamed.³⁴⁹

A farmer from Kyaukphru Chinkarri Village, Kyaukphru Township, elaborated in an interview on the difficulties farmers are facing (see interview excerpt 13 in Annexure I):

“Nine buckets of paddy seeds, 60,000 kyat (US\$ 60) and three sacks of fertilizer were provided for those farmers who have three acres of paddy farm by the Better Life NGO based in Kyaukphru Town. We have to pay 1,500 kyat (US\$ 1.5) a day to labourers for planting paddy seedlings in the paddy farm and tending the paddy fields. To make matters worse for farmers it is very hard to get labourers to work for the paddy farms, because the contractors of the Shwe Gas Project³⁵⁰ in this area provided 4,000 kyat (US\$ 4) per day for carrying stones and pebbles to the construction site of the project. So the farmers did not finish cultivating paddy seedlings in the farms until now, due to difficulties in getting labourers.”

In the first week of August 2011 torrential rains hit Kyauktaw again and the Kaladan River flooded some villages.³⁵¹ At no point in time did NLM give any flood warning regarding the Kaladan River, as it did with other major rivers flooding.³⁵² A major reason being, no doubt, that there are no hydrology stations located in Arakan State.³⁵³

People were evacuated to schools and monasteries. Local people were providing food and water, and health care. On 7 and 8 August Thandway Wards 1, 2, 4 and 6 were flooded. About 60 families moved to

relief camps. On 9 August a wooden bridge in Taungup was destroyed on the Taungup-Thandway Road.³⁵⁴

During the floods in the worst-hit town of Pakokku, Magway Region, aid was urgently required, however, the government was apparently stalling over relief efforts - as usual, makeshift relief teams and local businessmen had to fill the gap.³⁵⁵ This was visiting President *Thein Sein*'s relief logic:

*"the victims for their part are to work harder than before. [...] the government will build the temporary housings only, and the victims are to improve their housings on their own. The victims are to make long-term plans to be able to stand on their own, without complacency in the life of easy come, easy go."*³⁵⁶

There is a big gap between President Sein's ideal and the reality of the situation: how *easily* people in Arakan State improve their housings on their own. Firstly, the UN report "*Cyclone Giri 6 months on*" mentioned that:

*"[...] the rainy season is approaching and [...] the majority of the fully destroyed houses were those of the poorest, vulnerable households which typically lack cash and need to prioritize meeting their basic needs such as food and water rather than materials and tools needed for reconstruction of their houses"*³⁵⁷

Most houses in Arakan are built with nipa palms,³⁵⁸ timber and bamboo. However, thousands of people were unable to make repairs due to the high price of these local construction materials, e.g. bamboo was up to 30,000 kyat (\$30) for 100 pieces since the cyclone hit and the price of stitched palm leaf flaps was over 30,000 kyat (\$30) for 1,000 pieces.³⁵⁹ The average income of a worker amounts to around \$1 per day.³⁶⁰ Many months on, there's been no assistance in most villages, e.g. near Taung Sai Kan, Mraybon Township: no tarpaulins or tents and neither the government nor INGOs had provided reconstruction material.³⁶¹ Secondly, the majority of Arakanese are so poor that only 1 in 20 poor households had quality roofing in 2010. Only slightly over a quarter of the *non-poor* can afford quality roofing (28% vs. Burma average: 58.6%), ranking Arakan the poorest of 14 states and one in dire need of assistance.

Table 6.1: Access to Quality Roofing in Burma and Arakan State (2005-2010)

(Sub-quality roofing includes thatch/leaves/palm/dani (i.e. nipa) and bamboo; quality roofing means: tin pieces/tiles/corrugated metal/wood shingles/cement.)

Access to quality states roofing	Poor		Non-Poor		Total		Ranking / 14
	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	
Arakan State	9.9%	5%	19.6%	28%	16.4%	19.6%	Worst
Burma	27.8%	32%	50.3%	58.6%	44.1%	52.9%	

(Source: *Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar: MDG-Relevant Information*, UNDP 2007 and 2009-10)³⁶²

During his flood relief visit President *Thein Sein* continued to say that:

*"it was important to practice right ways to be able to supply the donation of the government, private and non-governmental organizations to the hands of the flood victims"*³⁶³

The reality was very different from the "*right ways*". In Yesagyo Township, Magway Region, a monk led a group of 30 youths and informed the authorities of their relief work. The municipal chief replied that they do not have permission to work because of the Buddhist full moon celebration. Nevertheless, they collected donations, whereupon the township's administrative chief *U Zaw Soe* summoned them, warned them and threatened to charge them as they did not have the authorities' approval. Meanwhile thousands had sheltered in monasteries, but little government emergency relief was forthcoming - only local relief

groups sponsored by local businessmen offered any help. However, even under the new civilian government, help by civilians is still at their own peril: after Cyclone Nargis dozens were arrested, and remain in jail, because the government saw their help as undermining state operations.³⁶⁴

The authorities also closely monitored any relief for victims. For instance, in Pakokku those who wanted to donate were required to notify officials one day prior, giving information about the content and amount of material they were giving to the donation centre in ‘Thiwatha Rama monastery’.³⁶⁵

Apart from the government’s attitude, other parallels with Giri relief and the flood situation include little to no media exposure, the lack of vocal support and assistance by non-Arakanese organisations or parties, and the fact that the citizens affected had been ignored and essentially let down by the international community:

- **Lack of media exposure** – there are good reasons for the lack of coverage - in Pakokku, Magway Region, a DVB reporter reported that officials in relief areas had warned journalists not to photograph the damage, and were seen confiscating memory cards from cameras “*but they returned cameras. They also asked you to delete photos*”.³⁶⁶ It seems that the Government wishes to keep the situation private so as not to show the conditions people are living in. After Cyclone Nargis in 2008, some journalists had been given lengthy prison sentences for documenting the ghastly aftermath which demonstrated the government’s incompetency to manage the disaster.³⁶⁷
- **Lack of political support** - the NLD explained that they could not provide much assistance due to the difficulty in finding sufficient financial resources and communication with the affected areas. They were providing education assistance in suburban townships in Rangoon but did assign the local NLD offices to provide as much assistance as possible to the flood victims. The local authorities and other parties had not provided assistance, and even harassed the NLD by questioning and prohibiting them to give assistance. Some local social networks and organisations were assisting the victims, but in most places it had been inadequate;³⁶⁸
- **Lack of shelter** - after Giri struck, the first priority should have been to rebuild what was absolutely necessary to prevent a next disaster when the subsequent monsoon hit, some eight months later. However, more than 100,000 cyclone survivors had to suffer the worst monsoon for decades without a solid roof over their head due to funding shortages;³⁶⁹
- **Unfinished embankment repair**: 45% of the embankment was damaged³⁷⁰ and after 6 months it was 193 km short of target to be repaired “*before the rainy season in order to increase preparedness capacity for future disaster*”;³⁷¹
- **Substandard dyke repair** - on the islands dykes were restored with the help of a few (I)NGOs, some paid the workers, others did not,³⁷² but many were not sufficiently solid as they broke again during the heavy rains in July, hence, the farmers on the islands could not cultivate paddy farming this season;³⁷³
- **No international flood relief fund** - in June 2010 \$13,261,143 in emergency flood relief assistance was donated to North Arakan’s three townships,³⁷⁴ for the 2011 flooding in South Arakan there was no flood relief fund.

6.3 Starvation and Water Shortages

“There is another reason for the starvation, because there is not any relief from NGOs currently for cyclone-affected people in the area. Even though NGOs provided rice and other goods to cyclone victims over the last few months, NGOs have now stopped relief to the villagers. This is the main reason for the starvation.” (Ko Khain Lin, a social worker in Mraybon)

*“Villagers Hit Hardest by Cyclone Giri Face Starvation”*³⁷⁵

Hundreds of Arakan families ended up starving between June and August 2011.³⁷⁶ Cyclone Giri had destroyed the 2010 harvest, so people could not store rations for 2011 or plant crops. Moreover, the affected farmers struggled throughout 2011 for survival because they received no assistance to treat their salinated lands in order to make them suitable for farming again.³⁷⁷ Hence, they had to buy rice, however, the torrential rains and floods,³⁷⁸ and rough seas with wind speeds up to 45 mph (72 km/h)³⁷⁹ impeded any fishing and deprived them from food or an income to buy food. The supply of cheaper rice was insufficient to meet the demand³⁸⁰ and by February, rice prices had again increased by 6% on average.³⁸¹ Other staple food prices had increased double that.

Staple Food Price Rises

“The impact of high food prices on livelihoods continues to be underestimated.”³⁸²

Traditionally, in Arakan State rice is grown once a year (May to October). This is partly due to low access to irrigation, with only 5% of farmers having access.³⁸³ Giri struck just before the November harvest. This has resulted in 77% damage to rice paddy in the worst hit townships.³⁸⁴ In the week after Giri rice demand increased, and the UN had declared that 200,000 people would require food aid for the next three months. This caused the price to increase by 20-25%, which was 20,000 kyat (\$20) per bag.³⁸⁵ Many people were deprived of their staple food. This effect of local and regional purchase of food aid is generally considered good for emergency aid because it reduces the cost and delivery time, helps local producers, but coordination is supposed to reduce the risk that local purchases will drive up prices, and through mismanagement food became expensive.³⁸⁶

Relief workers had reported that the price of rice had first increased from 12,000 to 18,000 kyat per 50 kg, because of Cyclone Giri, but also because the rain stopped the rice transport from other parts of Arakan State. Survivors depended on NGO handouts for their daily food because during the rainy season they have no source of income, however, many NGOs stopped their food relief after three months, resulting in extreme food shortages.³⁸⁷ In February WFP had found that post-Giri all non-rice staple food had also increased in price, but wages had only increased about 1/3 of the food price rise (see **Table 6.2**), and predicted food shortages if the international food assistance would stop.

Table 6.2: Post-Giri aggregated Food Price and Wage Changes in the worst hit Townships

Staple Food	Price changes	Average Price Change	Change of Wages
Onions	18.75%	12.10%	4.25%
Chili	14.25%		
Pulses	10%		
Garlic	9.75%		
Cooking oil	7.75%		

(Source: WFP Food Security Assessment in Four Cyclone affected Townships, February 2011)³⁸⁸

From January to October 2011 rice prices have risen 24% in Northern Rakhine State (NRS), while the wages have not, and since at least half a year in some places in NRS the price of a basic food basket exceeds 100% of wage labour “*indicating severe food access issues*”.³⁸⁹ In other words, people are starving as their income is insufficient to buy food.

However, the main reason for the starvation was the end of the INGO supplied food for the cyclone victims; despite the rice shortage the hardest hit villages did not receive any rice or other relief anymore.³⁹⁰ The victims also didn’t receive any seeds or rice crops to grow, support and help themselves. The international community was aware of the consequences, and in February, the WFP had concluded that in the hardest hit townships:

“[...] food assistance has contributed to improve the food consumption since more than a third of the households, with acceptable consumption, had food assistance as major source of food. Households without access to food assistance had poor or borderline consumption.”

[...] more households could be having poor food consumption if they did not get on food assistance. Furthermore, 40% of household debt is used on food purchases. This implies that the adequate consumption for some households is not sustainable, and thus the long term food security situation of households in this area is fragile.”³⁹¹

Over 500,000 or 70% of the inhabitants of the four hardest hit townships are food insecure. Those who are moderately food insecure account for 49.5% (**357,948 persons**) and severely food insecure is 20.3% (**146,823 persons**). Overall, 64% of households have poor food access.³⁹² The authorities didn’t render assistance to the flood victims, only some local donors supplied some rice, but it was largely insufficient.³⁹³

In 2011, rice was again in short supply due to the rains and the flooding that damaged production in four states, including major rice producing states such as Arakan. There was little or no harvest as after July/August the rice could not be grown anymore. Although monsoon damage to rice crops is normal, the *Myanmar Rice Producers’ Association* announced that rice production in 2011 could fall by 1.7 million tons, a 10 % drop.³⁹⁴

Most of the affected people in the flooded townships were already living in poverty, but could now be facing long-term famine. Food shortages were arising due to ravished paddy fields, leading to rising food and commodities prices, but they were exacerbated by other factors such as wage inflation and increased transportation costs.³⁹⁵ Transportation in the state was also very difficult as many bridges and roads, including many parts of the *Rangoon-Sitetway Highway*, were destroyed by the heavy rains and flooding.³⁹⁶ This has also led to all the bus stations in the state being shut down.³⁹⁷ Many villagers fled to monasteries and safe places on high land, aggravating food shortages due to overcrowding.³⁹⁸

A farmer from Kyaukphru Chinkarri Village, Kyaukphru Township, explained the farmers’ predicament, both for 2011 and 2012 (see interview excerpt 13 in Annexure I):

Currently, most of the cultivated paddy farms have been destroyed by flood and torrential rain. Additionally, rats have plagued paddy farms and have still not been eradicated. Consequently, the farmers are now facing famine and a shortage of paddy seeds for re-growing the paddy farms. So it’s a real problem for next year for food and paddy seeds.”

Water Shortages

Q: Which relief items are most important for you at this moment?

A: *To be honest, we are in real need of all basic relief items such as rice, drinking water and so on. Some drinking water arrived in our village, but we never got any drinking water. We were told that we could get drinking water only when we were ill. I think it’s not fair.*

Interviewee from Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township (see interview excerpt 10 in Annexure I)

Giri came at the end of the rainy season, making it impossible to rehabilitate ponds and wells and to fill them up as it would not rain again in the area until May 2011.³⁹⁹ Hence, four months after Giri struck, due to this lack of post-monsoon precipitation, the water in the ponds was not yet potable and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster assessment showed that some 120,000 people needed water, sanitation and hygiene assistance until June 2011.⁴⁰⁰ *Dara Johnston*, UNICEF chief of the WASH cluster said:

“We are trying to get back to the condition before the cyclone.”

The results of both Cyclone Giri and the flooding in 2011 are still being felt across Arakan State. Food shortages and contaminated sources of drinking water mean that malnutrition and water borne diseases are rampant, especially in many rural areas. When we discussed Arakan State’s situation before Giri struck, it was mentioned that less than half the population had access to clean water (49.5% vs. national average of 69.4%) – the second worst in Burma. The access to improved sanitation amounted to 54.3% (national average 79%) – the worst in Burma.⁴⁰¹ In the Giri affected areas, many people suffered from water access and quality problems.⁴⁰² The most affected villages in Marmbra, Mraybon, Pauktaw and

Kyaukpheu townships depend on ponds and wells (see **Table 6.3**), and there are chronic dry season water shortages - a relief need also identified as a potential gap in relief assistance by the IA RTE after Nargis: potable water during the dry season, which begins in October.⁴⁰³

Table 6.3: Potable Water Access for Giri Survivors' Households

Source	Marmbra	Pauktaw	Kyaukpheu	Mraybon	Total
(I) unprotected sources	70.8%	59.4%	34%	34%	45%
do not filter or boil (I)	49.4%	18.9%	67%	20%	36%
boil or filter (I)	50.6%	81.1%	33%	81%	64%
(II) protected wells	29.2%	40.6%	66%	65%	54%

(Source: WFP Food Security Assessment in Four Townships affected by Cyclone Giri)⁴⁰⁴

Unprotected water sources pose a serious health risk, especially for children. In February in South Mraybon there were 7,300 people with no immediate access to drinking water and water had to be supplied by boat, costing 1,000,000 kyat (\$1,000) a month.⁴⁰⁵ Once the (I)NGOs and their relief assistance leave Arakan State, the survivors are much better off than before because, like the housing situation, there has not been any BBB long-term structural upgrading of the potable water situation.

6.4 Healthcare and Education

When it struck, the roofs of the three main hospitals in the affected area were blown off by Cyclone Giri.⁴⁰⁶ In a rare admission that it needed outside help, the SPDC sought mobile medical teams from international agencies to assist the cyclone victims. The *World Health Organisation* (WHO) sent infusions, oral rehydration salts, antibiotics and even eye drops. UNICEF distributed inter-agency emergency health kits, water guards, oral rehydration salts, bleaching powder and medical supplies, and the IOM sent health teams, including mobile and fixed clinics. The *UN Population Fund* (UNPF) provided assistance to the damaged hospitals and distributed reproductive health kits, including condoms and midwife equipment, while the *Ministry of Health* and the *Burmese Medical Association* sent teams of doctors with supplies.⁴⁰⁷ This shows that when aloud to help the international community can provide for those in need quickly.

A medic from Sitetway told the interviewer that after the cyclone, he had visited more than twenty villages, including some that were so remote that they had not been reached by the government or INGOs. Consequently, these remote villages had not received sufficient support to rebuild their farming and fishing livelihoods. Due to a lack of medicines for survivors with diarrhoea⁴⁰⁸ or other waterborne diseases, the health care situation was horrific (see interview excerpt 14 in Annexure I). The healthcare situation in Arakan State pre-Giri was already deplorable.⁴⁰⁹ A post-Giri survey in the hardest hit townships



found that 57% say that they have difficulty paying for medicines and/or health services, and 46% for sickness/healthcare.⁴¹⁰

89% of households have no latrines (in Pauktaw Township 92.8%).⁴¹¹ This means there is open defecation in nearly 100% in rural areas and over 60% in the towns⁴¹² which could lead to widespread disease.78% declared never having received any health education on hygiene (or basic nutrition).⁴¹³ After 6 months OCHA reported “more partners should be encouraged to engage in WASH activities as the gaps for interventions remain uncovered, except for Mraybon Township”.⁴¹⁴ However not enough local or international NGOs can provide sanitation training and whilst they are gaining

knowledge the villages still lack the materials and infrastructure needed for good sanitation. At present the government doesn't seem to be helping and it allocated just 1.3% of its proposed 2011/12 budget for health care, 99.5 billion kyat (\$110 million),⁴¹⁵ ranking among the lowest in the world: less than \$2 per capita.

Education

People in Arakan State value education greatly and though they are the second poorest state in the Union, their third highest expenditure is on education (9.9%),⁴¹⁶ unfortunately, it is not the third highest expenditure of the government and the education budget allocated for Arakan 2011-12 amounts to 4.57 % of the total budget⁴¹⁷ (approx. \$7 per head).

Many months on, Giri's destruction and damage of local schools was a prevalent reason (39%) why children did not go to school. Official reports acknowledge that approximately 150 schools were heavily damaged and 200 schools were partially damaged, which disrupted schooling for some 23,000 pupils.⁴¹⁸ However, poverty remains the main reason: 47.2% of children cannot pay the fees, uniform and books (see **Table 6.4**). Teachers are also hard to come by. Burmans who are appointed by the government to be teacher assistants often resign instead of coming to Arakan State as they do not like the people or the climate.⁴¹⁹

Table 6.4: Reasons for Primary School Absenteeism in Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphru, Marmbra

Reason for Absenteeism(February 2011)	Girls and Boys
Cannot pay school fees, uniform, textbooks	47.2%
School damaged by Giri	38.6%
Illness/ Handicap	16.5%
Absent teacher/ Poor quality teaching	14.2%
Not interested	11.0%
Child work for cash or food	7.1%
Poor facilities	3.9%
Domestic household chores	3.1%
Cannot pay transportation / far away	2.4%

(Source: WFP Food Security Assessment in Four Townships affected by Cyclone Giri: Kyaukpyu, Minbya, Myebon and Pauktaw of Rakhine State, Myanmar Vulnerability)⁴²⁰

The only other option left is to migrate and work outside Arakan State.

6.5 Migration

“Entire Arakan Villages Hit by Giri Moving to Kachin State” (The Irrawaddy, 19 May 2011)⁴²⁶ “over a million people have left their [Arakanese] homeland for mainland Burma and neighboring countries due to political oppression and economic hardships in their state.” (Narinjara, 7 July 2011)⁴²⁷

Four months after Giri struck, a WFP survey found that of the survivors in the four hardest hit townships, 2% had migrated - in Mraybon Township it was 5% - a total of around 10,000 people.⁴²⁸

Cyclone Giri aggravated an already very precarious existence in one of the least developed state in Burma: decades-long underdevelopment, heavy government taxes and restrictions leaving no opportunity to earn a decent livelihood despite multi-billion dollar projects,⁴²⁹ and shortages of food and water. The causes of displacement in Arakan State mentioned in a 2007 *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* survey are: food insecurity (87.20%), economic motive (78.20%), other Human Rights violations

(69.20%), *louq a pay* (66.70%), extortion/heavy taxation (66.70%), land confiscation (53.80%), and restriction of movement (34.60%).⁴³⁰

The cyclone and its aftermath of insufficient assistance and aid was, for many, the tipping point and they decided to leave their home state.⁴³¹ A Cyclone Giri survivor from Pauktaw Township almost lost his life when he was swept away in the river while working on his family boat. Since his family business was destroyed, he decided to migrate to Thailand where he has been working since February 2011, just like some other Arakanese youths who left because of the Giri consequences (see interview excerpt 16 in Annexure I).

Dozens of Arakanese youth, particularly from Mraybon, Pauktaw and Kyaukphru, left for different parts of Thailand or for Kachin State in northern Burma for better job opportunities. According to interviews conducted in September and October 2011 more than 300 youths from the townships of Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphru and Marmbra emigrated to different parts of Thailand, particularly Mae Sot, Bangkok, Maha chai, Phuket, and Hat Yai. There are likely to be many more youths who migrated to Thailand, Malaysia and other countries,⁴³² with the majority going to Thailand. There are concerns that migrants may not return to Arakan as some of them have sold off their property.⁴³³

Arakanese and Burmese migrant workers were going to Thailand for better job opportunities before cyclones Nargis⁴³⁴ and Giri,⁴³⁵ and are likely to continue going. But there was a significant increase in economic migration, especially amongst Arakanese youth, in the aftermath of Cyclone Giri.⁴³⁶ According to AHRDO sources, there are approximately 100,000 Arakanese migrant workers in Thailand, and between 12,000 and 15,000 Arakanese migrant workers in Malaysia. According to the interviews, they would not have left Arakan State if their businesses, such as paddy farms and shrimp farms, had not been destroyed by the cyclone. As it is, they had no choice but to leave for other places for better job opportunities even though they suffer exploitation there.

Additionally, according to many relief workers, hundreds of Arakanese youths from Giri affected townships also migrated to Kachin State for better job opportunities, usually as casual labourers⁴³⁷, such as working in Chinese owned jade businesses, gold-mining, rubber, cassava and palm oil plantations⁴³⁸ or for the *Yuzana Company* owned by *Htay Myint*.⁴³⁹ The living conditions of these migrant workers in Kachin State have been terrible due to the poor wages, working conditions and accommodation provided by employers. There has been no proper healthcare for the Arakanese youths, who have been infected with malaria and other diseases, and no help has been provided to these vulnerable people.⁴⁴⁰ Very few people are aware of the situation of these young migrant workers as there has been no media coverage of this issue.

In a major privatization drive, the new Arakan State government has auctioned off 200 business areas located on streams, rivers and the sea in 14 townships, adding a major reason for the migration, as fishing businesses have disappeared under the current scheme.⁴⁴¹

The Arakanese population has contributed very little to climate change which causes or compounds much of the cyclone threat. The *Climate Change Vulnerability Index* ranks Myanmar 10th globally in terms of the countries most vulnerable to extreme weather-related events,⁴⁴² creating its own kind of climate-induced displacement (see **Box 6.3**).

Box 6.3: Climate-related Migration is a serious Threat

“Climate change-related migration is ‘a serious threat to the sustainable growth and stability of Asia and the Pacific’, a draft report [“Policy Options to Support Climate-Induced Migration”] by the ADB has warned. If not acted upon immediately, it ‘has the potential in the decades ahead to become a humanitarian crisis’, Bart W. Edes, director of the Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division at the ADB, told DVB. ‘Right now, governments and the international community are not addressing climate-induced migration.’ ‘Migration as a form of adaptation will be a more common response to the impact of climate change than the displacement of entire

communities,’ the report continues. ‘The latter will occur as a last resort once adaptation possibilities and community resilience are exhausted.’ The Burmese population’s reliance upon agriculture could, in an increasingly unfavourable climate, be a strong push factor for migration to both Burmese cities and to neighbouring countries. Around 70 percent of Burma’s population survives on agriculture. ‘[T]he issue of climate-induced migration will grow in magnitude and will take different forms’. Moreover, ‘at present, no international cooperation mechanism has been set up to manage these migration flows, and protection and assistance schemes remain inadequate, poorly coordinated, and scattered.’”

(Source: Joseph Allchin, “Climate-related migration ‘a serious threat”, DVB, 8 February 2011⁴⁴³

6.6 Two Years on: An Overview

“One year on, Giri Victims Continue to be Neglected” “Famine in Much of the Cyclone-Giri Affected Area of Arakan”

*Narinjara*⁴⁴⁴

These two newspaper headlines said it all: the 2010 natural disaster was turned into a 2011 man-made disaster. Two years on, the condition of many victims had not improved at all.⁴⁴⁵ the survivors have largely been left to their own survival. NGOs provided emergency relief for 3 months. At this point the type of relief provided became refocused on long term recovery, as opposed to immediate emergency needs but it was not enough. There was no proper government recovery programme or help with comprehensive dyke reconstruction and there was a minimal NGO presence to continue the distribution of relief supplies and help with the recovery. Famine ensued, just like had been predicted in INGO reports:⁴⁴⁶ the cyclone had destroyed the harvests and dykes of paddy farms, so no paddy cultivation could be done and people had to depend on (too) expensive imported rice, leading to starvation. The torrential rains and storms of July left more than 70,000 survivors still lived under plastic/tarpaulins since their houses had not been rebuilt, and the situation only increased the famine as the only food and income alternative for farming - fishing - had become impossible.

How could things have come this far?

“The primary purpose of much of the information about the relief and reconstruction programme was to raise funds for aid organisations, leading them to camouflage the problems inherent in the programme. The primary function of many of the sources was not to provide independent information. Nor was their primary function to assess the success or otherwise of the aid programme. Aid organizations exaggerate the outcomes that can be obtained from any reconstruction programme following a natural disaster, as was the case after Cyclone Nargis”.

Nick Cheesman *et al.*, *Ruling Myanmar: From Cyclone Nargis to National Elections* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), p. 227.

Let us compare the situation of the relief provided and the needs of the survivors.

Tables 6.5, 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 below detail the relief response at different time intervals (1, 2, 3 and 6 months) after Giri struck. They are accumulative and as comprehensive as possible from the available data. The tables show the relief provided by the 9 relevant clusters who undertook the Giri relief effort. The various UN agencies, INGO’s and local NGO’s worked in clusters depending on their areas of expertise, each cluster being one of the key areas that needs addressing in the aftermath of a disaster. Many of the organisations were involved in different clusters, especially where there was significant overlap (for example UNICEF, with their mandate of assisting children, were involved in the education, health and nutrition clusters, as well as undertaking some food distribution). Where assistance has been provided outside of the cluster system, for example by the government or CBO’s through their own resources, these have been shown in addition, where information was available.

Table 6.5: Relief Effort 1 Month After Cyclone Giri

Clustertype	Response 1 month after Giri
Food & Livelihoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1,718 MT of mixed food commodities⁴⁴⁷. Local authorities distributed 1,200 bags of rice to 5,000 people on a daily basis in Mraybon Township⁴⁴⁸ 5,100 2-week supply food kits distributed to Mraybon and Marmbra⁴⁴⁹ 5,700 households involved in Immediate Income Generating Activities (IIGA) in Mraybon and Marmbra Townships⁴⁵⁰
Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> therapeutic feeding for 2 months for 500 children under 5 years of age⁴⁵¹ 3,000 households in Marmbra and Mraybon Townships received 2 week nutrition rations⁴⁵² 952 children screened for malnutrition in 4 worst hit townships⁴⁵³
Education	1. target: 159 temporary learning spaces and 130 semi-permanent schools ⁴⁵⁴
Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interagency Emergency Health Kits</i> (IEHK)⁴⁵⁵ dispatched: Mraybon (15), Pauktaw (5) and Marmbra (5)⁴⁵⁶ 1 medical team operated a fixed clinic in Mraybon Town and covered 18 villages through mobile services, assisting 2,612 patients⁴⁵⁷ 1 medical mobile team visited 7 villages in Kyaukphru for 765 patients 2 fixed and 3 mobile emergency medical teams in Mraybon Township 1 mobile emergency medical team in Marmbra Township Emergency medical mobile teams operate in East and Middle Phayonkar Islands, Pauktaw Township, assisting a population of 134,260 74 Red Cross volunteers given health promotion and public health emergency training Birth spacing services for 1,663 clients 550/797 <i>Clean Delivery Kits/Dignity Kits</i> for pregnant/needly women Antenatal care for 559 pregnant women
Shelter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20% of affected people (10,400 households) get emergency shelter kits⁴⁵⁸ 3 IDP camps established in Kyaukphru by the authorities (2,000 tents)⁴⁵⁹ RSWM gave 100 bamboo poles and a tarpaulin to 1,000 households⁴⁶⁰ RSWM also distributed 200 tents to 1,270 evacuees⁴⁶¹ 75 plastic rolls for shelter to 350 households from French Red Cross⁴⁶²
WASH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2,000 family kits⁴⁶³ distributed in Mraybon and Kyaukphru⁴⁶⁴ 19,000 oral rehydration salts units, 1,000 gloves and 680 pieces of soap⁴⁶⁵ 3 water purification units installed in Mraybon (2) and Kyaukphru (1) which distribute 315,000 litres of safe drinking water to 583 families⁴⁶⁶
Logistics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9,400 m3 of storage capacity: Sitetway (1,600 m3), Mraybon (5,000 m3), Kyaukphru (2,800 m3)⁴⁶⁷ Jetty in Mraybon under construction⁴⁶⁸
Protection	1. Cluster established 10 November 2010 and assessment carried out ⁴⁶⁹

Table 6.6: Relief Effort 2 Months After Cyclone Giri

ClusterType	Response 2 months after Giri
Food & Livelihoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3,000 MT of mixed food commodities distributed⁴⁷⁰ Food security and livelihood assessment, covering 680 households in 55 villages in 4 townships
Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1,373 children under 5 monitored for malnutrition⁴⁷¹ 1,838 households in Mraybon Township received supplementary blended food rations
Education	1. 41 temporary learning spaces constructed

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 59 temporary learning spaces/semi-permanent schools in progress School kits provided for 7,000 children
Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 mobile clinics in 40 villages of Taung Zin Kan, Taunggoat Township⁴⁷² 2 medical teams conducted mobile clinics in East and Middle Phayonkar Islands, Pauktaw Township, covering the 15 most affected villages. 1,037 patient consultations took place (29 November to 17 December) 7 mobile medical teams operated in 69 villages in Kyaukphehu and 48 villages in Pauktaw Township A medical team operated a fixed clinic in Mraybon Town and covered 32 villages through mobile services A mobile medical team visited 19 villages in Kyaukphehu, providing life-saving sexual, reproductive, general health care (6,748 beneficiaries) 893/918 <i>Clean Delivery Kits/Dignity Kits</i> to pregnant/need women
Shelter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23,400 households received emergency shelter kits
WASH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6,900 household kits distributed⁴⁷³
Logistics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jetty in Mraybon with unloading of boats to commence 10 December⁴⁷⁴ 14,000m³ total storage capacity in Sitetway, Mraybon and Kyaukphehu⁴⁷⁵
Protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 283 teachers get psychosocial training: Marmbra (110), Pauktaw (173)

Table 6.7: Relief Effort 3 Months After Cyclone Giri

Cluster Type	Response 3 months after Giri
Food & Livelihoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8,000 MT of mixed food distributed (November 2010 – January 2011)⁴⁷⁶
Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment: 8.7% of GAM⁴⁷⁷ requires targeted supplementary and therapeutic feeding beyond 2100 calories nutritionally balanced ration⁴⁷⁸ 12,000 children under-five in need of nutrition monitoring and micronutrient supplementation Target: 3,500 under-two to receive supplementary blended rations Target: treat 60% malnourished children in Mraybon through 38 sub rural health centres
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 103 temporary learning spaces in government schools constructed 37 temporary learning spaces in government schools in progress 24 temporary learning spaces & 20 semi-permanent schools in progress in community & monastic schools
Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> First aid services to 1,027 people⁴⁷⁹ Emergency health and care services to 1,352 people
Shelter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of affected people (36,400 households) get emergency shelter kits⁴⁸⁰
WASH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25,000 people in 50 villages received safe and clean water daily⁴⁸¹ 3,500 households received cups and 20 litre buckets 11 ponds and 2 wells rehabilitated 15 wells and 5 ponds cleaned 27 school latrines constructed 4 metre dam built on Ngwe Twin Tu Island: 3 million litres of water⁴⁸²
Logistics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 jetty built in Mraybon; 6 ships hired for food transport from Sitetway⁴⁸³
Protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1,027 received psychosocial support

Table 6.8: Relief Effort 6 Months After Cyclone Giri

Cluster type	Response 6 months after Giri
Food & Livelihoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 161 km of embankments repaired (first target was 168 km) (February – May 2011)⁴⁸⁴ Target: repair further 193 km of embankments 17 ponds and 31 km of roads in 105 villages in 3 townships repaired through <i>Food For Work</i> activities (February – May 2011) 2,153 farmers received cash grants to enable them to cultivate 3 acres (1.21 ha) of paddy land each⁴⁸⁵ 18,450 people participated in the <i>Food For Work</i> projects (including their families a total of 92,250 people) received food rations until May 2011⁴⁸⁶ 2,564 households in Mraybon get small fishing gears and livestock
Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Over 700 children get outpatient therapeutic/supplementary feeding 900 children and 2,000 households get supplementary food rations Over 2,000 pregnant women received micronutrient supplement 60 mother groups were trained for <i>Infant Feeding in Emergencies</i> (IFE)
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 150 temporary learning spaces established to resume school for some 21,000 children in the 4 worst affected townships The <i>Ministry of Education</i> reconstructed 113 schools
Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 hospitals, 10 <i>Rural Health Centres</i> (RHCs) and 21 Sub-RHCs reconstructed in the 4 worst affected townships 54 health care providers trained in <i>Integrated Disease Surveillance System and Early Warning and Reporting System</i> (17 townships) 2 medical teams conducted mobile clinics in East and Middle Phayonkar Island in Pauktaw Township, covering the 15 most affected villages. 1,037 patient consultations took place (29 November - 17 December)⁴⁸⁷ 7 medical teams in Kyaukphru (69 villages) and Pauktaw (48 villages) A fixed clinic in Mraybon Town and mobile services in 32 villages A medical team visited 19 villages in Kyaukphru, providing essential life-saving sexual, reproductive, general health services to 6,748 patients 893/918 <i>Clean Delivery Kits/Dignity Kits</i> for pregnant/needy women
Shelter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3,547 households i.e. c.20,000 affected (17.7%) get emergency shelter 2,100 households (10.5%) will receive more permanent shelter in 2011
WASH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> C. 25,000 people (50 villages) get clean water daily to the end of January 8,740 people (8 villages) received clean water daily since January 2011 Non-food items, health, water, sanitation provided to 13,912 households in 4 townships in Rakhine State and 1 township in Magway Region⁴⁸⁸ 867 household rainwater harvesting kits⁴⁸⁹ 23,750 bottles of “<i>Waterguard</i>” household water treatment chemicals⁴⁹⁰
Logistics	N/A
Protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3,000 households received <i>Dignity Kits</i> 6,000 children received psychosocial support, including recreational and educational activities, through the <i>Child Friendly Spaces</i> (CFS) 55 <i>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i> (SGBV) training sessions were conducted for humanitarian workers

Let us now have a look at the effect of the above on the situation of the cyclone survivors’ needs. A table (see **Table 6.9**) only shows the facts and figures, but hides the human misery:

Table 6.9: Needs of Giri Survivors in the worst hit Townships 1,2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 Months on

Months after 22 Oct. in Mraybon, Kyaukphru, Pauktaw, Marmbra	Food / Water	Need Food Assistance	Homeless	Livelihood
1 month: 784 MT of rice distributed by 9 November; some IIGAs initiated by UNDP	86,000 farming; 7,500 fishing families	200,000	(after 3 weeks: 81,000; and minimum 5,000 in camps) 100,000 still living with host families camps closed	Few job opportunities due to damaged agricultural land, paddies & fishing equipment. casual labourers cannot work due to interruptions in these industries
2 months: relief backlog (funding shortage); recovery process has barely begun	61% of rice crop damaged i.e. a loss of 20,437 MT of rice (2010 harvest)	200,000 146,823 severely food insecure 357,948 moderately food insecure	100,000	77% of paddy fields damaged (262,320 acres) (106,157 ha) 681 embankments (total: 168km) protecting 67,000 acres (27,114 ha) of paddy
				need repair. 1,817 fishing boats lost. 50% of fishing households lost large fishing gear Est. 5,640 jobs lost due to damaged aquaculture ponds
3 months: many NGOs withdraw; shift from emergency to rehabilitation projects: food, water and utensils replaced by rehabilitation projects funding slowdown; food-for-work programme	many have food insecurity 60 % of the 2010 rice production lost; 90 % of rice fields damaged in Mraybon	200,000 “1/3 of survivors”	100,000 in plastic shelters or “rat-like conditions”; 91% of houses are yet to be rehabilitated; 30,000 families won’t get repair help 30% of affected population still haven’t received even emergency shelter kits (15,600 households)	68% in debt of who 85 % cannot repay in 2011 cluster received <3% of \$ needed
4 months: Due to a lack of post-monsoon precipitation, the seawater contaminated water in the ponds was not yet potable	7,300 have no water; 120,000 people need water, sanitation and hygiene assistance until June 2011	40% of debt for food	nearly 60% of houses will not be repaired or rebuilt before the next rainy season 91% of houses are not monsoon resistant	85% in debt av. 250,864 kyat (\$250 i.e. ½ year income) 27% debt since Giri 38% for livelihood
6 months: Few INGOs are left; inadequate assistance: dykes/embankments not repaired; monastic schools reconstruction not included in govt. aid programme;	food insecurity; damaged crops;	selling off farm land under market	104,000 i.e. 14,353 houses (72%) not rebuilt; inadequate housing for 2/	indebtedness; villagers lack money to repair alone; health problems further 193km of embankments still to repair

9 months: shortage of aid funding i.e.(less than 20% of \$57.3m required for recovery) INGOs: “needs elsewhere in the country, are also holding back recovery work”.	Starvation	92% face critical or borderline food insecurity in Mraybon	104,000 UN: “fewer than 30% of the destroyed houses rebuilt by 2012”	INGOs: “livelihood will take longer to recover than post-
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(Sources: 1 month;⁴⁹¹ 2 months;⁴⁹² 3 months;⁴⁹³ 4 months;⁴⁹⁴ 6 months;⁴⁹⁵ 9 months⁴⁹⁶)

The first completed food round dated around one month after the Giri cyclone; in the Nargis relief operation the UN estimated that after a month about one-third of the survivors still had not received any assistance.⁴⁹⁷ Nothing more was distributed directly after the end of January. WFP only distributed further food/rice through *Food for Work* schemes from February onwards.

After 2 months *The Irrawaddy* reported that relief was backlogged due to a shortage of funding and that the recovery process had barely even begun.⁴⁹⁸ “problems with getting aid to the region persist, despite lessons that should have been learned after Cyclone Nargis.”⁴⁹⁹

After 3 months UN HABITAT described the situation of 100,000 survivors: either they live under plastic/ tarpaulins or they are forced to stay with others in “cramped, dire and at times rat-like deplorable conditions.”⁵⁰⁰ The livelihood cluster had received less than 3% of funds needed. Once again, the funding slowdown for Giri echoed that for Cyclone Nargis victims.⁵⁰¹

After 4 months WFP predicted that in the worst hit areas, considering the depletion of assets and scarcity of labour, households which rely on farming or fishing would be vulnerable in the longer term, as their income would be unable to meet their basic needs and the repayment of debt (see **Table 6.10**). And when the international food assistance ended they would face food shortages. The predictions came true: mass starvation started in March 2011.⁵⁰²

Table 6.10: Type of Assistance received by Households in the worst hit Townships 4 Months after Giri;

livestock support	cash for house building	crop supports	cash for work	cash relief	fishing equipment	medicine/ health care	water purifying tablets/ bottles	shelter / shelter material	clothes	food
0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	3%	15%	17%	48%	53%	71%

(Source: *WFP Food Security Assessment in Four Townships affected by Cyclone Giri*)⁵⁰³

Six months after Giri, the race to repair dykes was on, to beat the monsoon arrival. In some villages, NGOs paid for repairs but they did not give money to some others.⁵⁰⁴ The authorities have not helped to repair the dykes, rather, they have forced farmers to pay back agricultural loans received last year. The lack of money forced farmers to rent their land to businessmen who used it as prawn farms.⁵⁰⁵ UNOCHA stated in its *Post-Giri Consolidated Action Plan*⁵⁰⁶ that there was huge indebtedness due to a loss of income opportunities; farmers had to sell off their farming land for very low prices to buy food.⁵⁰⁷ Few organisations, such as *Save the Children*, UNICEF and IFRC, are reportedly still active in some affected areas, providing victims with food and medicine.⁵⁰⁸ One month before the worst monsoon in decades would arrive, only 18 % of households had received emergency shelter, and only 1 in 10 received more permanent shelter.⁵⁰⁹

After six months, funding was far less than what was required:⁵¹⁰ for emergency response US\$19.5 million had been received, for recovery US\$11.4 million (20%), whereas the total funding requested for recovery was US\$57.3 million (see **Table 6.11**).

Table 6.11: Funding Shortfall for Giri Victims Recovery 6 Months on

Recovery Sectors	Funding Requested	Funding received	Shortfall	
	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(%)
Nutrition	700,000	0	700,000	100%
Protection	755,570	0	755,570	100%
Education	1,113,321	79,000	1,034,321	97%
Shelter	14,540,000	1,993,000	12,547,000	86%
Livelihood	31,700,000	5,420,000	26,280,000	83%
Food	1,871,712	347,385	1,524,327	81%
WASH	6,600,000	3,600,000	3,000,000	45%
Total	57,280,603	11,439,385	45,841,218	80%

(Source: Cyclone Giri 6 Months on – Situation, Achievements, Challenges, UNIC)

The response to Cyclone Giri has been supported by partnership core funds, private donations and the following donors: Australia, Canada, CERF (Rapid Response and Under Funded Emergency windows), Denmark, ECHO, France, Gates Foundation, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA. A cyclone victim from Ngarachai village, Pauktaw Township, gave the following answer (see interview excerpt 4 in Annexure I):

Q: How do you manage to survive now?

A: *If we have donors, we have food. But it's really difficult to get food without regular donors. We really want to live and survive through our own work.*

In other words, the survivors made it clear from the beginning that survivors do not just want food, they wanted their livelihood back. It is clear that the government is the first one responsible for not fulfilling the needs, but when asked for an explanation of why the relief and recovery fell short of fulfilling the needs of the beneficiaries or whence the delays, these were the reasons given (see **Box 6.4**).

Box 6.4: (I)NGO Reasons hindering Giri Relief/Recovery Programmes or causing Delays

- inadequate level of funding because “the needs are very great elsewhere the country”;
- some affected communities are on islands, so going onto the sea poses additional dangers and difficulties;
- the roads from Rangoon to Sitetway are terrible and in the rainy season they are often damaged;
- the tides are always changing and it is hard to forecast the weather conditions;
- villagers are unaware of personal hygiene, e.g. they have never used toilets and think it is dirty to have one in or near your house (after WASH training they accept hand washing, but not toilet hygiene);
- hired locals worked as translators, but because they have no NGO experience, they could not always transfer the message; and
- it takes a long time to get from offices in towns to villages and to link offices.

(Source: Nan Tin Htwe, “Giri recovery slows in Rakhine State”, *MMT*, 1-7 August 2011)⁵¹¹

Some reasons seem less reasonable than others, however, in the planning phase these risks must have been taken into consideration and remedies foreseen, failing which these agencies, most of whom have been in Burma for a considerable time and have conducted post-Nargis “Lessons Learned” evaluations, were not up to the tasks they had set themselves – to the extent they received donor funding.

Was there any change in government attitude vis-à-vis rights abuses, one year after the elections?

“These changes have been greeted with domestic and international optimism, but they are at an elite national level. There has been little measurable change in basic modes of governance or repression at the local level across the country. [...] The new government largely continues the official culture of denial over the human rights situation – even as

it formed a National Human Rights Commission in September, a body whose independence and commitment to promoting human rights remains an open question.” (Human Rights Watch)⁵¹²

To date no one has been held accountable for abuses during Giri relief and recovery operations.

SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS

*“What is important is to continuously advocate for humanitarian access to all populations in need”
Delbreuve, OCHA Burma head.⁵¹³*

This independent assessment and report has been written to raise awareness of the on-going impact cyclone Giri has had on Arakan state and its citizens. Victims and witnesses have had the opportunity to speak out and reach a wider audience and we wish to spread their voices and the situation to the international community, but also to the rest of Burma who seems to have forgotten about their people in the west who are still dealing with the impact of cyclone Giri 2 years on. The damage and the role of the local population in the relief and recovery effort has been recorded so that these stories are not forgotten. More details are needed, and this report should be the beginning of internal and external enquiries into the on-going state of the situation there.

Since its demise as a sovereign and powerful kingdom, Arakan state has become a great unknown to the international community. A deliberate policy of socio-economic impoverishment by successive regimes has relegated Arakan to Burma’s second poorest state with many of the “worst” development indicator rankings of an already underdeveloped country. Human rights violations are ubiquitous, as repeatedly confirmed by rights groups inside and outside Arakan, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. An increased militarisation and multi-billion dollar multinational projects have only exacerbated a situation that warrants much more international attention.

We have demonstrated that the regime in Burma, both in the guise of the SPDC and the new “civilian” USDP government, continue to show a callous indifference toward their citizens.

There were few “Lessons Learned” from previous cyclones: in Burma there is no legislation, no policy framework, no DRR competence of states, no allocation of resources, no implementation of international binding agreements, and no comprehensive early warning system. The government has still not purchased the necessary radar equipment to provide proper early warning of approaching cyclones and storm surges. Impacts of natural disasters have been censored and forecasts of Giri landfall and wind speeds were misleading, resulting in 259 deaths. Arakan is Burma’s most vulnerable state to natural disasters, and 34% of the population is at risk of coastal flooding, but no full repairing or reinforcing storm surge embankments in high risk areas took place. The military rather spends on itself and not on a comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction programme: there is a lack of mitigation measures, no cyclone shelters, no community preparedness, no flood control and draining programme, there is no reforestation of mangrove forests - or at least maintaining the existing ones – because of army businesses, and coral reefs have been dynamited for harbour and pipeline construction.

The “Lessons Learned” for Cyclone Giri included some advance warning, limited evacuation and prepositioning of supplies and increased co-operation between authorities, UN agencies, INGOs and an emerging civil society. **Table 7.1** shows the similarities between the Nargis and Giri relief and recovery operation, conducted under the SPDC and the new civilian Government respectively:

Table 7.1: Comparative Table of Interview Findings of Cyclone Nargis and Giri Survivors and Relief Workers

Relief Operation Issues	NARGIS	GIRI
BASIC NECESSITIES		
Survivors lacked clean water and food	X	X
Distance and cost of obtaining and transporting were challenges that had to be met, often at the sacrifice of meeting other needs	X	X
Shelters and new homes were inadequate; many residents were still homeless or in temporary housing	X	X
Concerned with the stability and protection provided by the new structures	X	X
HEALTH		
Diarrhoea and illnesses related to water shortages	X	X
Psychological disorders associated with traumatic event of the storm and loss	X	X
Basic health services remained insufficient (a reality even before the cyclone)	X	X
GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)		
Check-points were in place along routes during the early phases of response	X	X
“Fees” were charged to access disaster areas	X	X
Travel restrictions occurred	X	X
Aid workers were extensively monitored	X	X
Relief workers were required to give aid directly to the authorities	X	X
Relief and reconstruction materials were misappropriated	X	X
SECURITY CONCERNS		
Intimidation, abuse, and fear of arrest of relief workers	X	X
Security concerns further obstructed the delivery of aid to cyclone victims	X	X
INFORMATION		
Challenges and security concerns were associated with collecting information	X	X
Needs assessments and coordination of relief activities particularly were hampered by inability to independently collect data and communicate	X	X
Information released through the state-controlled media outlets minimized the extent of the disaster and needs of the victims	X	X

However there are still many gaps and things that could have been done better. The following summary shows that many lessons have not been learned from the Nargis operation⁵¹⁴ as far as the Giri relief operation is concerned, specifically or additionally:

The authorities

The first responsibility of the authorities is to protect their population. The Burmese government continues to refuse to acknowledge the magnitude of the Giri disaster and no official assistance amount or its effectiveness has been publicised. They blocked access to the worst affected areas, including for the media, because they were reluctant to reveal the true extent of damage and the death toll of minimum 259 in 4 townships alone. They limited the access by foreign relief workers to the victims, and refused aid workers from agencies that were not already present in Arakan, thereby violating their own citizens’ rights to food, shelter, health, and to life. *The Government told the UN to keep the relief operation “low profile”* with deleterious effects for the victims: an ‘informal’ UN cluster system for 2 weeks, less operational transparency, delays in information and delivery, and impact on the clusters’ roles and responsibilities.

Authorities, soldiers and village headmen have diverted donated relief goods (or confiscated after handing them out in front of the media) for their own use or for resale. Citizens in other parts of Burma were forced to donate for the Cyclone Giri victims and it is not certain whether the donations ended up with

those victims. The army cannot be held responsible and accountable according to the 2008 Constitution as the military remains outside civilian law.

The international community

To date there is little or no international pressure on the regime to give full humanitarian access to Arakan, and the media essentially chose the official death toll and damage figures without investigating. Giri disaster funding was deliberately weakened. The MRCS asked the IFRC not to appeal for funds and neither was a UN *Flash Appeal* nor a *Consolidated Appeal* launched. Donor funding was insufficient and monitoring and evaluation was limited. International agencies were aware in advance of food and water shortages, but did not manage to resolve them. Moreover, they inadequately rebuilt shelter, dykes and livelihoods, and constructed substandard housing despite Arakan State having record rainfall (16.4 ft/5m annually) and being the state most prone to cyclones.

There was an acknowledged improvement in co-operation between INGOs and the authorities as compared to the Nargis response, but to date Giri related protection gaps have not been addressed (including by the erstwhile protection cluster) such as “unpaid” labour for reconstruction or army underage recruitment. Much of the cyclone threat is caused or compounded by climate change to which the Arakanese population has contributed very little. The *Climate Change Vulnerability Index* ranks Myanmar 10th globally in terms of the countries most vulnerable to extreme weather-related events.⁵¹⁵ The vulnerable people in Arakan deserve more support from the international community to reduce disaster risk as developed countries were most responsible for man-made climate change.⁵¹⁶

The general election

16 days after Cyclone Giri, continued power was prioritised by the government in front of assisting their own citizens, by diverting resources away from relief toward holding a rigged election. The junta violated its own election law by not postponing the elections in the worst hit areas. The visiting PM canvassed for USDP instead of mentioning or directing the relief operation. The election was the pretext to keep foreign aid workers and media out. The USDP ordered to vote for them in return for aid and there was withholding of aid and destruction of (collective) property of those who did not.

The media

The international media continues to pay little attention to the cyclone and its aftermath, which initially impacted fundraising efforts and due to lack of awareness and pressure on the junta, it allowed for the manipulation of the assistance. Foreign journalists were barred from covering the elections and the cyclone affected areas. The official media did not show the real extent of the death toll and damage and was mainly used to highlight officials handing out aid.

The Burmese opposition

Burmese opposition groups outside Arakan did not respond to the Giri disaster as the election was clouding their vision. Arakanese opposition parties asked questions in parliament to the ministers regarding the authorities’ corruption in post-Giri rice assistance, but they were stonewalled and the publication of the answers was censored. The opposition is still restricted from holding meetings with the survivors in Arakan. Exiled groups were not able to draw enough attention to the Giri victims’ plight.

2011 torrential rains and flooding

Cyclone survivors were hit with a record rainfall in over 10 years, but there were no flood warnings issued from the authorities. By monsoon time the houses and livelihoods, embankments, and dykes were either not repaired, or a poor job was done. Again, survivors lost their crops. Authorities were stalling over relief efforts, there was a lack of media exposure inside and outside Burma. This time there was no international flood relief as there was in 2010 for floods in North Arakan State.

Starvation and water shortages:

Hundreds of families starved between June and August, mainly because INGOs stopped food aid, including the same INGOs that had predicted the shortages.

Healthcare and education

There is open defecation in nearly all rural cyclone affected rural areas and over 60% in the towns. **For 2011/12**, 1.3 % of government budget is for healthcare, which is an estimated \$2 per capita. 39% of children did not go to school because it was cyclone damaged. 4.57 % of the 2011/12 budget was for education, or about ± \$8 per capita).

Migration

Arakanese migrate for the following reasons: food insecurity (87.20%), economic motive (78.20%), other Human Rights violations (69.20%), *louq a pay* (forced labour) (66.70%), extortion/heavy taxation (66.70%), land confiscation (53.80%), and restriction of movement (34.60%). Post-Giri around 10,000 people from the 4 hardest hit townships migrated. Most are now migrant workers in Kachin State, Thailand or Malaysia where they are exploited by their employers and authorities.

What's happening now?

The survivors still have not been able to return to pre-Giri living conditions. Funding shortfalls are in all categories: Nutrition (100%), Protection (100%), Education (97%), Shelter (86%), Livelihood (83%), Food (81%), and water/sanitation/hygiene (45%). Giri survivors suffer from famine, lack of housing and livelihoods. No one seems to be stepping into assist them and at present no one has been held accountable for abuses that occurred during the Giri assistance operation.

“This [Giri] disaster was in danger of being forgotten, ignored and unseen by the international community.”

Andrew Mitchell, UK Secretary of State for International Development⁵¹⁷

So, was he right? The head of the Burma Office UK gave the answer six months later:

“Cyclone Giri - and the suffering it caused to a quarter of a million people in Burma - went largely unnoticed by the outside world.”

Paul Whittingham, head of the UK Department for International Development's Burma office⁵¹⁸

Now two years on this report hopes to re-raise some awareness and show the victims of cyclone Giri that they are not forgotten. Memorial ceremonies are held yearly for the Cyclone Giri victims in Arakan state, Rangoon and in Phuket and Mae Sot (Thailand)⁵¹⁹ – *lest we forget...*

SECTION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

We acknowledge and appreciate the assessments, relief and recovery efforts already made for the Arakanese cyclone and flood victims. For the parties involved that have made little or no effort we have some recommendations for them. And these recommendations are applicable to both the ongoing Giri recovery operation and future natural disasters that need to be planned for.

8.1 To the Burmese Government

The central Government should:

- end all unnecessary interference with the media, opposition parties and the relief and recovery operations and restriction of movement of (I)NGO's;
- encourage use of INGO/UN Immediate Income Generating Activities (IIGA) programmes, for all rebuilding efforts in Giri affected areas - there must be an end to “unpaid” labour for reconstruction;

- conduct relief and recovery efforts in a transparent fashion, including maintaining accurate records of monetary and material donations, stop misappropriation of relief goods and hold those responsible for the policy decisions and their implementation that resulted in avoidable harm and theft of aid, accountable;
- allocate, effectively spend and provide public information about a sufficient disaster management budget (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule I, Union Legislative List, 9(m));
- inform the victims of their rights, and take their needs and complaints into account;
- recognise that communities are the first responders, engage community groups in DRR policies, promote DRR education while taking into account community-based approaches and traditional knowledge, and utilise the local expertise of the State Government in the ongoing recovery efforts in Giri affected townships;
- invest in Doppler radar equipment to monitor meteorological conditions (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule I, Union Legislative List, 5 (f)), replant mangrove forests (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule I, Union Legislative List, 6 (g)) and install emergency community address systems;
- Implement all signed and ratified UN, ASEAN and other international DRR agreements on “*Lessons Learned*”; and
- the NDPCC should draft a DRR bill based on the IFRC *Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of IDRL Guidelines* and integrate DRR in all development sectors.

The Local Government should:

- invest in early warning systems and mitigation measures (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule II, Region or State Legislative List, 7 (e)) as part of a systematic contingency and development programme;
- include flood and storm surge embankments (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule II, 3. (e));
- widely disseminate warnings via all available media, build cyclone shelters, and organise community preparedness; and
- rebuild all the damaged schools, religious buildings and cultural heritage destroyed (*cf.* Constitution, Schedule II, 7. (e)(i)).

8.2 To the Donors

- Provide the required funding for shelter, livelihood and reconstruction;
- Use the threat of further sanctions to pressure the Government to fulfil its human rights obligations and to ensure access of the media and (I)NGOs to the Giri affected areas;
- Conduct a thorough human rights assessment of the relief and recovery efforts;
- no aid should be provided directly to the government as it encourages a lack of accountability and transparency, corruption and human rights violations – closely monitoring projects deters abuses;
- no contracts with any company known for corruption and/or human rights abuses; and
- Provide appropriate co-operation and funding for Disaster Risk Reduction programmes and Arakan State should get a fairer share of international funding to tackle climate change and its consequences.

8.3 To the United Nations

- Put in place an independent system to monitor and evaluate the efficiency of aid distribution, including an independent complaints mechanism;
- The *Humanitarian Co-ordinator* should remedy protection gaps;
- The UN *Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma* should fully investigate the reports of human rights violations in the Cyclone Giri affected areas including those documented in this report; and

- Strengthen the UN Rangoon mission's activities in human rights protection, monitoring and reporting especially in the ethnic states.

8.4 To local NGOs and INGOs:

- Continue to evaluate and support the ongoing needs of Cyclone Giri affected communities;
- Continue to monitor and document to ensure that aid programmes are beneficial to the survivors and do not involve human rights abuses; ~Increase the co-operation between local inhabitants, NGOs and INGOs in assessment, emergency relief and recovery phases using extensive local networks and information sources;
- Give more prominence to local efforts in public communications;
- Improve co-ordination mechanisms and structures by resolving cultural constraints e.g. agenda setting, Arakanese/Burmese language to communicate; and
- More international support for capacity building of national staff in INGOs and of local partners.

8.5 To local and international media

- Expose the crimes of the local authorities, such as corruption, uneven aid distribution and theft, based on first-hand accounts of survivors and relief workers; and
- Highlight the ongoing difficulties faced by the Cyclone Giri affected communities.

8.6 To Burmese opposition groups

- Lobby and urge the international community to give more support to the Cyclone Giri affected communities; and
- Place political pressure on the Burmese Government to be more accountable and transparent in terms of disaster expenditure, urging them to spend more on rebuilding and rehabilitation efforts in Giri affected areas.

8.7 To ASEAN

- Monitor rights violations and prepare a study on the thematic issue of human rights violations during disasters in Myanmar (Art. 4.12, Terms of Reference, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)); and
- See to it that Burma implements all signed and ratified ASEAN DRR agreements.
- Offer aid and supplies to ensure those affected by Giri can finally rebuild their communities.

Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO)

Founded on October 9, 2011, Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO) is a non-profit independent organisation that monitors and documents human rights, environmental and cultural abuses in Arakan State, promotes the development of the Arakanese people through education inside and outside Arakan State and informs local and international communities about the impacts of development projects in Arakan State of western Burma (Myanmar).

Our Vision

AHRDO envisages development taking place in Arakan State which benefits the least advantaged Arakanese people, which protects our ecosystems, mitigates any negative environmental impacts and respects our culture and historic sites. We believe that these principles will be best upheld within a free and fully democratic Federal Union of Burma that respects human rights, equality and justice.

Our Mission

Our mission is to educate and inform local and international communities about the social, economic,

political and cultural oppression faced by Arakanese people in development projects initiated by the Burmese government.

Objectives

- 1) To raise awareness within Arakan State and internationally about the effects of development projects on Arakanese people by informing regional and international communities through lobbying and advocacy efforts focused on the social, political, and economic oppression, environmental degradation, and human rights violations occurring throughout Arakan State as a consequence of large-scale infrastructure development and natural resource extraction projects by the Burmese government and its project partners.
- 2) To equip Arakanese activists with systematic knowledge for how to effectively conduct lobbying and advocacy activities.
- 3) To forge solid networks with other human rights and development organisations worldwide for regional and international lobbying and advocacy.

Our Activities

- Publications
- Public education
- Internal and external advocacy
- Cooperation and coordination with other organisations
- Networking and alliance building
- Awareness raising and mobilization
- Direct public actions (i.e. demonstrations, etc)
- Internal and external capacity building
- Protection and preservation of natural resources and ecosystems in Arakan State

Departments

In order to effectively and efficiently implement the activities and management of the organisation, AHRDO is organised into nine working departments. Each working department is made up of a director, deputy director, and staff members.

Each working department serves a different role, based on its position, to contribute to the effective and efficient operation, leadership and management of AHRDO; these roles are clearly defined in the constitution of the organisation, and each position has responsibility for its specific activities that are detailed in the organisational website at <http://www.arakanhrdo.org>. These working departments are as follows:

- 1) Publicity and Information Department (PID)
- 2) Research and Documentation Department (RDD)
- 3) Health and Education Department (HED)
- 4) Literature and Cultural Department (LCD)
- 5) Human Rights and Development Department (HRDD)
- 6) Environmental and Ecosystem Protection Department (EPPD)
- 7) Organisational and Public Affairs Department (OPAD)
- 8) Women Affairs Department (WAD)
- 9) Finance and Management Department (FMD)

[PART II]

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE I: Excerpts of interviews in 2011

1.

Gender: Female	Place of interview: Sareprum Village, Pauktaw Township
Age: 72	Date of interview: 3 September 2011
Profession: Retired	Type of interview: Telephone

She remembers the cyclone that struck Arakan State in 1968:

“Most of the houses in my village were totally destroyed. The village monastery and primary school were also badly damaged. But we (my family) were lucky that our house was only partially damaged, even though a very big tree from our compound was up-rooted and fell into the front of the house. Even though there was a lot of damage to houses and deaths of farm animals, fortunately no one died in my village. After the cyclone, the people in my village faced famine for weeks. We didn’t receive any support from the government and NGOs. So most of the villagers had to eat different kinds of fruits and drink impure and salty water just for survival that made them ill and infected with diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases. The problem was that there were no medicines, doctors or medics to take care of the vulnerable cyclone-affected people. This happened not only in my village, but in many other villages across nearly the entire state of Arakan. The cyclone left thousands of people homeless, hundreds of people injured, and at least 2,000 dead particularly in Ngamanreit Kyunt, an island where there are tens of villages in Mraybon Township. Additionally, the cyclone damaged a lot of mangroves along the Arakan coast that were very important for local livelihoods, as firewood, protection from natural disasters such as tidal waves, preventing soil erosion, and for providing suitable habitats for certain kinds of marine animals. Additionally, thousands of acres (1,000 acres = 405 ha) of farmland and plantation gardens were ruined, due to salt water from the sea, especially in the coastal areas. Even almost one month after the cyclone, we saw a lot of dead bodies floating along the rivers and tributaries. It was really a very terrible and awful scene to see those dead bodies.”

2.

Gender: Male	Place of Interview: Sitetway
Age: 29	Date of interview: 5 June 2011
Profession: Fisherman	Type of interview: Written

He recalls the 2004 Cyclone in Arakan State:

“The next day, I heard bad news of deaths and severe damage in Mraybon Township. In Kanhtoatgree alone, a sub township of Mraybon Township where I lived and worked, there were approximately 300 fishermen and women who died and severe damage to thousands of acres (1,000 acres = 405 ha) of shrimp farms. Additionally, I heard that at least 1,000 people died in Ngamanreit Kyunt alone, an island in Mraybon Township where there are dozens of fishing villages. But I don’t know exactly how many people died across the whole of Arakan State.

Two days after the cyclone, I went back to my home town Sitetway by motor boat. I saw piles of debris including destroyed fishing boats, fishing nets, scattered pieces of wood from the destroyed houses, trunks of up-rooted trees, etc. all floating on the rivers. I also saw many houses the roofs of which had been ripped off, uprooted trees, destroyed and fallen signboards, lampposts, etc. scattered along the streets, particularly piles of debris from those houses damaged on the Strand Road of Sitetway. Moreover, I saw that many fishing boats were still aground and some boats were up on the roofs of the houses. The worst thing was that Sitetway’s jetty was broken into two or three pieces, and a local cargo ship, named

“Shweli”, had capsized and was almost completely submerged. Unfortunately, I heard that no support or relief supplies were given to the survivors of the cyclone by either local government or the international communities [i.e. INGOs].”

3.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Bazunphae Village, Mrauk-U Township
Age: 27 Date of interview: 1 September 2011
Profession: Monk Type of interview: Written

He recollects Cyclone Mala, which hit Arakan State in 2006:

“Cyclone Mala killed three members of the same family from my village, Bazunphae, in Mrauk-U Township, in 2006, while they were fishing in the sea near the village of Krutchai kyunt in Mraybon Township. They were Aung Sein Htwan (42) and his two sons: Sein Than Maung (20) and Nyi Nyi Chay (18). In total, Aung Sein Htwan had 4 sons and 2 daughters, so the rest of the family members were faced with poverty following the death of their father and brothers. Later his wife chose to become a nun, due to the great sorrow she felt at the death of her husband and two sons. The remaining two sons and two daughters were adopted by relatives.

There was no assistance from the government or NGOs to the family. But some well-wishers from my village gave some support to the victims. At least 30 people died and there was widespread damage to houses, fishing boats and nets in Krutchai kyunt Village, a fishing village where there are about 500 households. I don't know exactly how many people died and how much damage was caused across the whole of Arakan State by cyclone Mala, but I guess that there would be a lot of people killed and significant damage to houses, farming animals and other infrastructure.”

4.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Ngarachai village, Pauktaw Township
Age: 35 Date of interview: 6 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman Type of interview: Video

Q: What about food now? How do you manage to survive now?

A: *If we have donors, we have food. But it's really difficult to get food without regular donors. We really want to live and survive through our own work. There is no medicine at all; we don't take any medicine when we are ill.*

Q: We heard that there is a clinic run by the government. Is that true?

A: *Yes, it's true. But we are not well, even though we go to the clinic.*

Q: You are not healthy now?

A: *I don't feel very well now.*

Q: What has caused your ill health?

A: *I don't feel strong and healthy like before, as I have lost my appetite and don't want to eat, drink, etc, and feel some depression due to the cyclone.*

Q: We heard that there are army doctors in this village. Is that true?

A: *Yes, it's true. They often give some medicine and bottles of medicine, but they don't do any vaccinations if we go to the army clinic.*

Q: What about your relations with them?

A: *Actually I've never gone there, and most of the villagers dared not go there. If we receive cash from donors, we just buy medicine from the village shops.*

5.

Gender: Male Place of Interview: Prumwun Village, Mraybon Township
Age: 47 Date of interview: First week of October 2011
Profession: Fisherman Type of interview: Written

Q: How many family members do you have?

A: *We have six family members, including my wife and I. We were very lucky that no family member died during the cyclone.*

Q: Did you receive any support after the cyclone?

A: *Yes, we did receive some rice, some roofing materials from local donors, but not from the government and NGOs. The problem is that we only got some support for a few weeks. Since then we have had to manage to survive by ourselves. It's really bad that we didn't receive any support from the government.*

Q: Did you get any support for rebuilding your house and buying fishing equipment damaged by the cyclone?

A: *We didn't get any support from the government and NGOs for rebuilding our house or to repair our fishing boats and equipment. Therefore, we still have a lot of difficulties in rebuilding our family livelihood, since we don't have any capital to buy fishing equipment. This also means we are not able to send our children to school. As parents, we feel ashamed that we are not able to send our children to school. We've got no choice, but worry terribly for the future of our children.*

6.

Gender: Male	Place of Interview: Kahntoutgree Village, Mraybon Township
Age: 45	Date of Interview: 15 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman	Type of interview: Video

Q: Who gave you this tent?

A: *It was given by a general. And the UN also provided these kinds of tents.*

Q: Is it true that you have to give compensation if this tent is destroyed by fire?

A: *It's absolutely right that we have to give 450,000 kyat (US\$ 450) as compensation.*

Q: When will they take it back from you?

A: *They said we can use it until we can build our own houses.*

7.

Gender: Male	Place of Interview: Kahntoutgree Village, Mraybon Township
Age: 47	Date of Interview: 15 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman	Type of interview: Video

Q: Who gave you this tent?

A: *We received this tent from the army.*

Q: We heard that you will have to give compensation if the tent is damaged. Is that true?

A: *Yes, it's true that we have to give 350,000 kyat (US\$ 350) as compensation. We were told that it can't be torn or damaged by fire. So we only use it at night for sleeping. We dare not smoke and eat betel nuts inside the tent. We don't allow family members to enter the tent during the day time. We are afraid of paying compensation of 350,000 kyat (US\$ 350), especially in our current situation, where we don't even have enough food.*

8.

Gender: Male	Place of Interview: Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township
Age: 52	Date of Interview: 15 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman	Type of interview: Video

Q: How many households does this village have?

A: *There are about 130 households in our village. And there are about 30 households outside.*

Q: How many houses were damaged?

A: Almost all of the houses were destroyed. There are about 3,000 thiho mango trees, which were all destroyed. We received no support from the government even though we informed them about this. These trees have been an important part of our livelihoods our whole lifetime, but now they are all gone. Now our village monk is trying to replant some of the trees. It's not possible without any support from the government or others. We know that the government obstructed foreign donors. It's reckless. Now we only receive relief supplies from the people of Sitetway, the capital of Arakan state. The Western Commander told us that he would provide 300,000 bamboos to our village. He also said that he would provide other relief supplies, but we received nothing. He didn't keep his promises. It's nonsense. Then, he insisted that we will have to rebuild our livelihoods by ourselves. You can't sit and live without doing anything. He reiterated that he's already ordered 300,000 bamboos: 100,000 for Phonthar Chaung and 100,000 for Laymro Chaung. But I sincerely doubt that we will receive any bamboo.

9.

Gender: Male Place of Interview: Mraybon Township
Age: 37 Date of Interview: 3 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman Type of interview: Video

"Initially we were provided tarpaulins for temporary tents, but they were taken back from us after we slept one night there. The Western Commander visited us and said 'is there any possibility to make bricks with which you can build buildings and live there? Only then you can be protected from natural disaster of cyclones'. He insisted that we build houses by ourselves in this area, because there is lots of wood nearby. The local library was used as a rescue centre. The village leaders usually slept there and initially took good quality relief supplies for themselves, giving the rest of the relief supplies, which are very low in quality, to others."

10.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Ngarachai Village, Pauktaw Township
Age: 42 Date of interview: 1 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman Type of interview: Video

Q: Was your house damaged?

A: Yes, my house was completely destroyed.

Q: What did the Western Commander give to you?

A: He distributed some tarpaulins, blankets, a few longyis,¹ some packages of Mar Mar noodles, some packages of noodles, a few packages of Arakanese traditional noodles, some cooking oil, some cooking pots, a few bowls, etc.

Q: How did he distribute them?

A: We had to make a lottery to get them, due to the shortage of relief items in our village. I only received one tarpaulin through the lottery, but I didn't receive any other relief items. The problem is that most of the relief items were lost on the way to our village. The village headman has created lots of problems while distributing relief items. When the donors didn't leave relief supplies in the village headman's house and actually distributed them directly to the villagers, all of the relief items were fairly distributed among the villagers. However, if they left them in the village headman's house, the relief items were not equally distributed and most of the relief items were kept in his house. When relief items were equally distributed the villagers were very pleased and appreciated what they received. Unfortunately, the Western Commander and most of the donors did not oversee the distribution and they just left the relief supplies in the house of the village headman, which caused many problems in the village. Only a few villagers received most of the relief items, but most of them didn't get all of the items that were donated.

Q: Other than ourselves, which organisations distributed sacks of rice to you?

A: No other organisations donated sacks of rice. We only received a few relief items from different people and organisations. You are the only group that has distributed one sack of rice for each household. We really appreciate it. Actually, we saw many sacks of rice, but I don't understand why most of them were lost. There were also lots of longyis delivered to our village, but I didn't get one of the longyis to wear. Even though a lottery was made, the people get only the second-hand ones, because the family of the village headman received all the new ones. The village headman is actually a relative of mine. Even the distribution of pairs of slippers was made by lottery, but I didn't get even one pair of slippers. Chillies, torch lights and beans were delivered to the village headman's house by various donors the day before yesterday, but he only distributed a few of them to the villagers, and kept the rest for himself and his family. I think the distribution of some relief items is just for show, since it was not distributed to people equally. That caused a lot of problems among the villagers.

Q: Which relief items are most important for you at this moment?

A: To be honest, we are in real need of all basic relief items such as rice, drinking water and so on. Some drinking water arrived in our village, but we never got any drinking water. We were told that we could get drinking water only when we were ill. I think it's not fair.

11.

Gender: Female Place of Interview: Thunganut Village, Marmbra Township
Age: 50 Date of interview: First week of October 2011
Profession: Farmer Type of interview: Written

Q: Did you hear any news about other people who received support in other villages from the government/ NGOs?

A: Yes, we heard that some people got quite a lot of support in some villages, particularly from the government or USDP. They were supported by USDP, because they provided advance votes to the USDP. It's really a shame for our national cause that those villagers didn't support and give votes to our national party, RNDP.

12.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Ngarachai village, Pauktaw Township
Age: 62 Date of interview: 6 November 2010
Profession: Fisherman Type of interview: Video

Q: Will you have to vote in the election tomorrow? For which party will you vote? And why will you vote for that party?

A: As Arakanese, we will vote for an Arakanese party.

Q: If they vote for an Arakanese party, will the villagers be arrested?

A: Actually not. We can all vote for an Arakanese party.

Q: Can the entire household vote?

A: Yes, although the government told us that we would have to vote for them. They told me that 'your eyesight is not good' and so you must take the ballot paper from the ballot box and give it to us. They told me that 'you can't refuse what we want you to do'. If you make the wrong selection, that ballot will be destroyed. They said that they will give three ballot papers for each person. You just need to say that 'our sight is no good for these three ballots'. Then, it is better that they complete the ballots themselves. If we vote by ourselves, those ballots would be got rid of, because we are Arakanese and will vote for Arakanese.

13.

Gender: Male Place of Interview: Kyaukphru Chinkarri Village, Kyaukphru Township
Age: 40 Date of interview: 3 September 2011
Profession: Farmer Type of interview: Written

“Nine buckets of paddy seeds, 60,000 kyat (US\$ 60) and three sacks of fertilizer were provided for those farmers who have three acres (1.21 ha) of paddy farm by the Better Life NGO based in Kyaukphru Town.”

“We have to pay 1,500 kyat (US\$ 1.5) a day to labourers for planting paddy seedlings in the paddy farm and tending the paddy fields. To make matters worse for farmers it is very hard to get labourers to work for the paddy farms, because the contractors of the Shwe Gas Project in this area provided 4,000 kyat (US\$ 4) per day for carrying stones and pebbles to the construction site of the project. So the farmers did not finish cultivating paddy seedlings in the farms until now, due to difficulties in getting labourers.”

“Currently, most of the cultivated paddy farms have been destroyed by flood and torrential rain. Additionally, rats have plagued paddy farms and have still not been eradicated. Consequently, the farmers are now facing famine and a shortage of paddy seeds for re-growing the paddy farms. So it’s a real problem for next year for food and paddy seeds.”

14.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Sitetway
Age: 28 Date of interview: first week of October 2011
Profession: Medic Type of interview: Written

Q: To how many villages did you go to take care of people after Cyclone Giri?

A: *I’ve gone to over twenty villages in three different townships: Pauktaw, Mraybon and Kyaukphru since the cyclone. Most villages I visited are in very rural and remote areas that were not reached by the government and INGOs. The situation is still terrible, since they didn’t get enough support to rebuild their livelihoods and rehabilitate farming and fishing infrastructure.*

Q: Could you please explain the health care issues faced by survivors after the cyclone?

A: *The health care situation was terrible for the first month after the cyclone, as we didn’t have enough medicines for the people infected with diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases. Worse, there was no medical support from the government or INGOs to the ill nor to prevent other infectious diseases arising from contaminated drinking water.*

Q: What do you want to say to the government and international community?

A: *I want to say, particularly to our government, that they should increase the budget spent on health care especially in rural and remote areas where there are no clinics. They should give more medical support particularly to those who are most affected by the cyclone. At the same time, I’d like to urge and request the international community to support the already vulnerable and affected Arakanese community who were terribly affected by the cyclone.*

15.

Gender: Female Place of interview: Pauktaw Township
Age: 38 Date of interview: first week of October 2011
Profession: Teacher Type of interview: Written

Q: Did you hear any news of support for rebuilding schools badly damaged by the cyclone?

A: *Yes, I heard that some villages only received some tin for roofing and some wood, but the materials needed for fully rebuilding many schools in the villages have not been provided. The majority of the schools in many villages in different townships badly hit by the cyclone have not been rebuilt yet. It’s impossible to rebuild those schools without any support from the government or international community.*

Q: Can you explain what support for education of children whose schools were destroyed has been provided since the cyclone?

A: *As far as I know in Pauktaw Township, most of the villages have not received any support from the government or any NGOs/ INGOs for rebuilding their schools. All the schools have been run by local donations with little or no support from the government or international community.*

Q: What do you want to say to the new government and international community?

A: I'd like to encourage and request both our government and the international community that they should give enough support and increase assistance for rebuilding hundreds of schools damaged across Arakan State, and other necessary support to enable the schools to purchase learning materials and stationery for thousands of school children. I'd like to reiterate to our new government to increase the budget for education, particularly in the remote areas most affected by Cyclone Giri.

16.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Mae Sot
Age: 29 Date of interview: 10 September 2011
Profession: Businessman Type of interview: Audio

When Cyclone Giri struck on 22 October, this man from Pauktaw Town, was working in his family business on a motor boat.

"We could not balance the motor boat, as the wind of the cyclone was too strong. We had lost control and the boat was heading in no specific direction. When the boat ran aground on the bank of the river it was hit by a large, broken, tree and severely damaged. Fortunately, all of us in the boat survived, but we could not move our boat. The strong wind threw us into the river. We tried to swim to higher land, but we were not successful due to the strong wind and river current. We became separated from each other. Luckily, I grabbed hold of a plastic box floating by, held onto it, and was carried along by the current of the river. I saw a lot of dead bodies, as I exhaustedly swam to the bank. Then I met a person who, like me, was also struggling to swim to the river bank. We both grabbed onto a broken tree floating in the river and used it to help us swim to the river bank. We reached the bank, at approximately 3am of 23 October. Once we were able to get our bearings, we realised that we were in Dwaychaung Village in Mraybon Township. The village was severely damaged by Cyclone Giri. I saw that all of the houses in the village were totally destroyed by broken and uprooted trees and coconut trees. We were given some food by the youths of the village. I only stayed one day in that village, before heading to Prumwan Village where I heard that there were 70 deaths.

Within a few days of the cyclone, 3 INGOs had arrived in Mraybon Township. These INGOs had been instructed that they had to supply any relief items to the cyclone victims under the management and supervision of the army officers based in Mraybon Township. However, the relief workers did not accept this and they tried to negotiate with the army personnel to allow them to oversee the distribution of the relief supplies. Unfortunately, the negotiation was not successful, so the INGO relief workers had to go back home without giving any support to the cyclone victims.

Then we heard that the Western Commander was coming to Mraybon Township. So the affected villagers were forcibly summoned to build a helipad for his arrival. Some of the villagers agreed to help build this helipad, but the majority refused to participate. Those who helped build the helipad received some relief supplies, but those who refused, were not given any relief items, not even rice or clothes, as punishment. I feel very bitter at seeing the terrible way the cyclone survivors were treated.

I was stranded in Kyunthaya, Prumwan and Ngapathon villages for a month, before I was able to return to Pauktaw Town. My family business had been destroyed by the cyclone, so I went to Thailand to seek work. I have been living and working as a migrant worker in Thailand for 8 months now. I'm not alone. There are many youths from Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphru and Marmbra townships, all of which were severely affected by Cyclone Giri, working as migrant workers in different areas of Thailand."

17.

Gender: Male Place of interview: Kyaukphru Chinkarri village, Kyaukphru Township
Age: 43 Date of interview: 3 September 2011
Profession: Farmer Type of interview: Written

"There are many labourers who do not have any farmland, so they have to work for stone breaking sites. They do not receive any support from the government or NGOs. Consequently, most of the people are living hand-to-mouth in our village. If families are registered with Better Life NGO, based in

Kyaukphru town, each family receives 150,000 kyat (US\$ 150) for rebuilding their livelihoods. However, due to transport difficulties, it's really difficult to travel from our village to Kyaukphru town and get registered."

ANNEXURE II: Petitions

The AHRDO recollection of a person* close to the National League of Democracy (NLD) regarding data collection, donated funds and petitions about the losses and damage due to Cyclone Giri

The main aim of collecting data and information about the Cyclone Giri affected people was to see how the donated funds were being utilized. After the deadly cyclone hit Arakan State of Western Burma, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) supported an emergency campaign to raise money for those affected by the natural disaster. The money raised would then go to the victims, repairing homes and schools, and minimizing the damage on embankments of agricultural fields, cultivated paddy farms, shrimp farms, fishing equipment, etc. Whilst the Cyclone Giri affected people needed to be supported and funds were pledged, this data collection report serves as proof that little of the pledged relief money actually got to those in need.

The exact amount of money from the International community to the campaign is unknown, but at least 13,900,000 Kyat (aprox. \$13,900) has been publicized. With the help of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Arakan State Organizing Committee of NLD 3,900,000 Kyat was donated. The other 10,000,000 Kyat was donated through U Aye Tha Aung, the Secretary of Committee Representing for People's Parliament (CRPP). The Arakan State Organizing Committee of NLD also separately donated rice twice (valued at the amount of 3,700,000 Kyat) although this occurred before the data collection process. Since the data collection, we are unaware of how much was pledged from the international community to the NLD. Regarding this, the NLD-HQ might have information on the amount of funds pledged from the international community but it is unknown to the Arakan Organising Committee of the NLD.

Some people from the Organisation Committee of NLD Mraybon Township also conducted private data collection on the damage and losses of their township, but they were not directly authorized by the Arakan State Organising Committee or the NLD head office. It was known that the then Temporary Chairperson of the Arakan State- NLD, U Maung Krum Aung gave an explanation about the missing money, blaming it on the weaknesses of data collection. Currently no information or details has been offered regarding the use of the 13,900,000 Kyat donated to the Cyclone Giri Victims by the International community.

*for personal security reasons the reporter cannot be named

Note: 1,000 Kyat was equivalent to 1 US\$ at the time of Cyclone Giri until the middle of 2011.

1.

To

Chairperson
National League of Democracy (NLD)
Mraybon Town

Date: 23 December 2010

Subject: Request for assistance to repair Shrimp Farms damaged by Cyclone Giri

Regarding above-mentioned matter, about 200 acres of shrimp farms in Napae Chaung owned by 18 people from the Pauktu Taung Village Tract, in Mraybon Township, were destroyed by Cyclone Giri that severely hit Arakan on October 22, 2010. Though attempts have been made to repair the damaged of embankments, those attempts have been delayed, as the owners of the shrimp farms were struggling with

the difficulties of food, accommodation and finance. Thus, we, the undersigned people, are sending our petition to get necessary assistance in order to repair the embankments to the damaged shrimp farms.

No.	Name	Signature
1.	U Khin Maung	
2.	UMaung Than Nyo	
3.	U Aung Tin Chay	
4.	U Kyaw Htwan	
5.	U Ba Thein	
6.	U Thein Mya Maung	
7.	U Tin Maung	
8.	U Maung Myint Chay	
9.	U Shwe Thein	
10.	U Maung Naing Htay	
11.	U Maung Htay Myint	
12.	Daw May Than Chay	
13.	U Maung Shwe Phru	
14.	U Aung Saw Phru	
15.	Daw Hla Nyunt Khin	
16.	U Maung Warm Hlaing	
17.	U Ni Daung Yin	
18.	U Aung Htwan Kyi	

2.

To:

Office In-Charge
UNICEF
Relief Group of the Cyclone
Mraybon Town

Date: December 24, 2010

Subject: Requesting assistance to repair the damaged village pond.

Regarding above-mentioned matter, we, the villagers of Oakan Village in Mraybon Township, are facing difficulties with a shortage of drinking water and water for other uses, as our village pond was fully damaged by the natural disaster.

The length of the pond is 200 feet, the width is 100 feet and the depth is 4 feet. The pond is now submerged with salt water and also covered with debris.

Thus, we are sending our petition for the required financial assistance to repair our destroyed village pond.

Submitted By:

U Maung Pyi
U Aung Kyaw Thein

U Aung Shwe
Members of National League for Democracy (NLD)- Village Level
Oakan Village, Mraybon Township

3.

To
Chairperson
National League of Democracy (NLD)
Mraybon Town, Mraybon Township

Date: 21 December 2010

Subject: Reporting Shrimp Farms Damaged by Cyclone Giri

1) Regarding above-mentioned matter, we, the islanders of 34 people, including U Kyaw Thein from the Tharataung Village Tract, are reporting damage to shrimp farms caused by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.

2) 3,500 wingspans, that are equivalent to 100 War-chai (local measurement of paddy farms or fields), which is the equivalence of about 600 acres, were destroyed.

3) Thus, we are reporting and requesting that the NLD of Mraybon Township give support in order to repair the embankments of damaged shrimp farms.

On behalf of islanders,
/s/ [U Kyaw Thein]

Head of Island
Sabahtar Island

N.B: The list of islanders' names is mentioned in the separate attachment.

No.	Name	Signature
1.	U Kyaw Thein	
2.	U Maung Thein Htwan	
3.	Yar Maung	
4.	Saw Nu Aung	
5.	Zaw Warm Naing	
6.	Khin Shwe Thein	
7.	Aung Aung	
8.	U Saw Htwan	
9.	Zaw Naing Htay	
10.	Maung Phru	
11.	Ba Saw Khin	
12.	Khar Nyunt	
13.	Pauksa	
14.	Hla Htwan Phru	
15.	Maung Tin Khin	
16.	Khin Shwe Maung	

17.	Maung Khin Nyunt	
18.	Maung Wai Nyunt	
19.	Maung Maung Chay	
20.	Nga Htwe	
21.	Maung Mra Thein	
22.	Htwan Htwan Myint	
23.	Htwan Phay	
24.	Bo Lun Htwan	
25.	Maung Myo Swe	
26.	Nyi Daung Chay	
27.	Maung Wun	
28.	Phru Aung Htwan	
29.	Daung Warm	
30.	Maung Kyaw Lun	
31.	Than Khin Maung	
32.	Htwan Aung Kyaw	
33.	Hmay Chay	
34.	Maung Naing Warm	

4.
To

All Donors of Natural Disaster
Mraybon Town

Date: November 13, 2010

Subject: Reporting Damaged Paddy Field Embankment in the area of Phalu Bwe Village, Pyi Chaung Village Tract.

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, we, over 700 families led by U San Aung Kyaw, are reporting that there are six damaged paddy fields in Phalu Bwe Village, Pyi Chaung Village Tract. They are:

- Mawhtet/Yarthai, Kyauk Chaung Field (600 acres owned by 152 families)
- Natpunrun Field (70 acres owned by 10 families)
- Khwason Daw Field (60 acres owned by 10 families)
- Sirun Chaung Field (500 acres owned by 62 families)
- Lankway Field (200 acres owned by 42 families)
- Yarkhun Field (20 acres owned by 2 families)

Now, all the embankments of these 6 fields were destroyed, as well as the paddies in those fields, by Cyclone Giri on 22 October 2010. The farmers are facing many difficulties in repairing embankments for the paddy fields, as they are struggling with very much difficulty over food and accommodation.

If the embankments of all these paddy fields are repaired in time, the affect on the livelihoods of about 700 families would be unimaginable. These families cannot continue to survive and will become despaired. Thus, we sincerely request that you give any necessary assistance and support to repair the badly damaged embankments on the fields.

On behalf of all farmers,

/s/ [U San Aung Kyaw]

National ID Card No. 11/MaPaTa (Naing) 048332
Phalu Bwe Village, Mraybon Township

5.

To

National League for Democracy (NLD)
Mraybon Town

Date: December 20, 2010

Subject: Requesting Assistance to Repair Shrimp Farms Damaged by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, the embankments of Kyipyi Chaung's shrimp farms, in Pauktu Taung Village Tract, were built by 3 people, but those 50 acres of shrimp farms were severely damaged by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010. Though we, the owners of these shrimp farms, tried to repair the embankments, we have been delayed due to the difficulties over finances for food and accommodation. Thus, we are sending our petition with the following undersigned persons to get necessary support in order to repair the embankments to the destroyed shrimp farms.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Owner signature</i>
U Aung Tin Chay	
U Tha Yar Aung	
U Maung Chait Htwe	

6.

To

Person In-charge
National League for Democracy (NLD)
Bahan Town, Rangoon

Date: December 21, 2010

Subject: Reporting House Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, we in west of Thaydan Quarter of Mraybon Town have been facing difficulties in repairing our houses and all our belongings that were destroyed by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010. We have often been feeling ill because our houses are inadequate against the wind and weather in the different seasons.

Thus, we are respectfully sending our petition for assistance to be able to repair our damaged houses and to solve the current difficulties faced.

Submitted people

- 1) U Khin Maung Than (1 Male & 2 Females)
- 2) U Naing Naing (3 Males & 1 Female)
- 3) U Khin Thein (3 Males & 2 Females)
- 4) U Htwan (2 Males & 2 Females)
- 5) Daw San Oo Wai (2 Males & 3 Females)
- 6) Daw Aye Thein (3 Females)
- 7) U Phru Than Chay (2 Males & 2 Females)
- 8) U Kyaw Htwan Myraint (3 Males & 2 Females)

West Thaydan Quarter
Mraybon Town

7.

To:

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Community (GRRC)

National League for Democracy (NLD)

Rangoon

To the respected Sirs and Madams of National League of Democracy (NLD), our house, 3,300 *Cashew* trees, over 700 *Ironwood* trees, 3,500 *djenkol bean* trees and 280 pepper trees were all damaged. Thus, I am respectfully sending our petition for assistance for rebuilding our livelihood relating to those damage, including our fishing boat.

Submitted person: U Thaung Warm

National ID Card Number: MaPaTa (Naing) 007057

Signature:

/s/

Balargya Village

Mraybon Township

8.

To

Person In-Charge

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (GRRC)- Arakan

Arakan State

Reporting to the National League of Democracy (ALD)

Date: December 20, 2010

Subject: Reporting Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, I, U Sein Mra Aung have lost the following belongings that were fully damaged by Cyclone Giri is reported to the concerned relief department.

- 1) Home (15 Feet * 30 Feet)
- 2) 12 acres of paddy farms
- 3) 2 cows
- 4) 1 buffalo

The value of the loss is 1,500,000 Kyat. I am sincerely sending the petition for assistance to be able to rebuild the livelihood of our family, as we have been facing difficulties with food and accommodation.

Submitted

U Sein Mra Aung

11/MaPaTa (Naing) 007017

Phalar Kya, Mraybon Town

Signature

/s/

9.

To

Cyclone Relief Group
Kyaukphru Town

Date: December 7, 2010

Subject: Reporting Embankments and Paddy Farms Damaged by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, the embankment of Thaipyat in Kanyaindaw Village, Marmgan Village Tract in Kyaukphru Township was destroyed by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010. The field number of embankment is 392 and the area length is 105 acres, which is relied upon by 16 families. The people from those families are now facing difficulties with food and accommodation. Thus, we are respectfully sending our petition for assistance, as we are facing difficulties with repairing the damaged embankment. The 16 people who are working on the embankment are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) U Shwe Than (Leader) | 9) U Maung Hla |
| 2) U Maung Wai Saw | 10) U Maung Myint Naing |
| 3) U Shwe Toat | 11) U Than Kyaw |
| 4) U Shwe Khin | 12) U Than Warm Hlaing |
| 5) U Khin Maung Warm | 13) U Khin Maung Htwe |
| 6) U San Chan Oo | 14) U Maung Khin Warm |
| 7) U Maung Sek Kay | 15) U Maung Aye |
| 8) U Maung Krar Htwan | 16) U Maung Hla Chay |

10.

To

National League for Democracy (NLD)
Cyclone Relief and Rehabilitation Committee

Date: December 28, 2010

Subject: Requesting Assistance for the Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, our house and plantation garden were totally destroyed by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010, and we are currently facing difficulties with food and accommodation. Thus, we are respectfully sending our petition for assistance to be able to rebuild our damaged family livelihood.

Submitted person:

/s/ [U Kyaw Zan Hla]

Ah Lay Kyunt Village
Ah Lay Kyunt Village Tract
Pauktaw Township

11.

To

National League for Democracy (NLD)
Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Organisation.

Date: 14 November 2010

Subject: Petition for Assistance

- 1) The people from Prunchay Village in Kyaukree Prun Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township are facing difficulties with food and accommodation, and repairing the embankments damaged by the Cyclone. Thus, we are sending our petition for assistance to be able to solve the difficulties of the villagers.
- 2) The names of embankments are: 1) Hla Phru, 2) Wunbay Chaung, 3) Hroung Aung and 4) Boma Kan Taung. About 1,300 acres of paddy fields were destroyed.

The people of embankments are:

No.	Name	Signature
1.	U Maung Maung Than	
2.	U Maung Ni Aye	
3.	U Maung Thein Phru	
4.	Aung Htwan Khin	
5.	U Tha Zaw Aung	
6.	U Aung Than Khin	

12.

To

Concerned Social Welfare Organisation

Date: December 20, 2010

Subject: Petition for assistance

- 1) Field number (402) and registered number (70), 750 acres of paddy farm, in Taychaung Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township, under a cooperative named the Praichaung Rural Development, is owned by 150 farmers with 816 family members working and dependent on the embankments in this vast land of paddy farms.
- 2) The farmers from the villages of Konchaung, Marmgan farm the fields inside the embankments. There is no other work for these villagers apart from farming, but these embankments and paddy farms grown inside were all destroyed by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.
- 3) There are 19 small embankments within the main embankment of Praichaung Rural Development, and the lowest encircling embankment is 6,000 feet long. To repair all the small and main embankments damaged, it would cost over 20,000,000 Kyat.
- 4) As the farmers are facing difficulties with a lack of rice store for an extended time, finance, and agricultural equipment, this petition for assistance is being sent in order to be able to repair the damaged embankments in time, through social welfare organisations. Additionally, the government is also being notified and we sent this petition in order to receive any necessary support from them in time.

It is represented that this petition for assistance, is true and is accurate.

Village Stamp under the name of village headman with his signature

Submitted person:

U Maung Saw Nyunt

Head of Embankments

Praichaung Rural Development Embankment

Marmgan Village

Copy to...

13.

[Official Stamp of the Monastery]

No. 47, Barway Monastic Post Primary Education School
Mraybon, Arakan State

To

In-charge

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Committee

Arakan Organising Group

National League for Democracy (NLD)

Subject: Reporting the Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, I, Venerable Monk, U Garawa am reporting the list of severe damage, mentioned below, to the concerned relief committee.

- 1) One Main Hall of Monastery: the length of the hall is 40 feet in circumference.
- 2) One Monastic Post-Primary Education School: the school is 60 feet in length and 25 feet in width.
- 3) One learning classroom hall: the hall is 40 feet in length and 25 feet in width
- 4) 2 wells for water supply
- 5) School furniture and learning materials.

The total value of the damage is about 8,000,000 Kyat. I am sending this petition for assistance, as my monastic post-primary education was badly affected by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.

Submitted person:

/s/ [Venerable Monk, Garawa]

[Official Stamp of the Monastery]

Venerable Monk, Garawa

Head of the Monastery

Barway Monastic Post-Primary Education School

Barway Village, Mrabon Township, Arakan State

14.

To:

In-charge

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Committee

Arakan Organising Group

National League for Democracy (NLD)

Subject: Reporting Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, I, Venerable Monk, U Zawana am reporting the list of severe damage, mentioned below, to the concerned relief committee.

- 1) One Main Hall of the Monastery
- 2) One well for water supply
- 3) School furniture and learning materials

The total value of the damage is about 5,000,000 Kyat. I am sending the petition for assistance, as the main hall of my monastery was totally destroyed by the Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.

Submitted person:

/s/ [U Zawana]

U Zawana

Thapraydaw Village, Mrabon Township

15.

[Official Stamp of the Monastery]

The Missionary of Buddhism

DPPS

To:

In-charge

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Committee

Arakan Organising Committee

National League for Democracy (NLD)

Subject: Reporting Damage Caused by Cyclone Giri

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, I, Venerable Monk, U Nyanathiri am reporting the list of severe damage, mentioned below, to the concerned relief committee.

- 1) One Main Hall of Monastery: the length of the hall is 18 feet in circumference.
- 2) One learning classroom hall: the hall is 24 feet in length and 20 feet in width
- 3) One learning classroom hall: the hall is 30 feet in length and 15 feet in width
- 4) 2 wells for water supply
- 5) School furniture and learning materials.

The total value of the damage is about 5,000,000 Kyat. I am sending the petition for assistance, as I have the difficulty of my monastic education due to the Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.

Submitted person:

/s/ [Venerable Monk, Nyanthiri]

[Official Stamp of the Monastery]

Venerable Monk, Nyanathiri

Wakheth Chaung Missionary of Buddhism Department

Mraybon, Arakan State

16.

[Official Stamp of the Monastery]

Naywartaung Village Tract Peace and Development Council

Kyaukphru Township

To:

Concerned person

Date: November 2, 2010

Subject: Petition for assistance

Field No. (425) and Registered No. (N4) with 130 acres of paddy fields belong to 29 people, including U Maung Nu Khin in Naywartaung, Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township.

There are 1,300 wingspans of embankments in the fields. 500 out of 1,300 wingspans and all the paddy farms with the salt water inside the embankments were destroyed due to the Cyclone Giri on October 22.

The farmers are now suffering the lack of food and have found it difficult to be able to repair the embankments and rebuild their livelihoods.

Thus, we are sending our petition for assistance to give necessary help to the farmers.

Head of people from the West Stream Embankments:

/s/ [U Maung Nu Khin]

1) U Maung Nu Khin

/s/ [U Maung Tha]

2) U Maung Tha

Marmgan Village

Paukphru Township

[Official stamp]

/s/

Chairperson

Naywartaung Village Tract Peace and Development Council

Naywartaung Village Tract, Kyaukphru Township

17.

To:

In-charge

Giri Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (GRRRC)- Arakan State

Arakan State

Reporting the National League for Democracy (NLD)

Date: December 27, 2010

Subject: Petition for Assistance to be Able to Repair Fields Damaged by Cyclone Giri

- 1) I am Aung Ban Sein, who is working on 25 acres in the fields named Rawma, Kraydaing in Wutgaung Village of Gaungphru Village Tract in Kyaukphru Township. I have made and preserved the 2,500 feet of embankments of which 85% was destroyed by Cyclone Giri, as well as the paddy farms growing inside the embankments.
- 2) Thus, I am sending this petition for assistance to receive necessary support to repair the damaged embankments and paddy farms.

Submitted person:

Signature: /s/ [U Aung Than]

Name: U Aung Than

NRC No.: 11/MaPaTa (Naing) 200270

Address: Wutgaung Village, Mraybon Township

18.

To:

Cyclone Relief Organisation

Kyaukphru Town

Date: December 21, 2010

Subject: Petition for Rehabilitation Assistance

- 1) The 60 acre Nawmahtwe Field, Field No. (402) and Registered as No. (N12) in Shwe Nyo Ma Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township, is owned by 30 people including, Maung Kyi Tin from Layhargree Village, in Layhargree Village Tract of Kyaukphru Township, who are working these farms, was severely damaged by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010. The encircling embankments is about 950 wingspans and there are 7 breaches of about 12 wingspans in length, 5 and a half

wingspans in depth for each of the damaged embankments. There are also 13 small other breaches of about 6 wingspans in length and 5 wingspans in depth.

- 2) Thus, 30 people including myself, Maung Kyi Tin, respectfully send this petition for assistance to the Cyclone Giri Organisation, as we are now facing difficulties with food, accommodation, and repairing the damaged embankments.

Yours respectfully,

30 people including Maung Kyi Tin

Lahargree Village

Lahargree Village Tract

The list of 30 people including Maung Kyi Tin who lost their embankments:

No.	Farmer's Name	Father's Name	Address	Field No.	Registered No.	Acres grown	Remark
1.	U Maung Kyi Tin	U Shwe Zan	Lahargree Village	402	N 12	2	
2.	U San Shwe	U San Htwan Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
3.	U Maung San Thein	U Shi San Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
4.	U Ba Thein Aung	U Phru Saw	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
5.	U Maung Htwe Chay	U Shi San Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
6.	U Warm Ja Aung	U Aung Htwan San	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
7.	U Maung Krun Chay	U Maung Phoe Htwan	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
8.	U Khin Maung Kyi	U Maung Saw Khin	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
9.	U San Hla Kyaw	U San Htwan Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
10.	U Maung Yay	U Shi San Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
11.	U Kyaw Kyaw Kha	U Maung San Thein	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
12.	U Maung Myint San	U Maung Shan Oo	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
13.	U Tha	U Maung Lu Gree	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
14.	U Maung Hla Tin	U Nga Kyaw Daung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
15.	U Maung Hla Chay	U May Chay	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
16.	U Maung Gree Yay	U Nyo Maung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
17.	U San Shwe Htwan	U Maung Saw Hlaing	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
18.	U Maung Khin Oo Maung	U Shwe Nyunt	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
19.	U Maung Warm Thein	U Krar Thein Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
20.	U Maung Kyaw Wun	U Krar Thein Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
21.	U Nga Kyan Aung	U Maung Chay	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
22.	U Nga Sa Lone	U Maung Tha Kyaw	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
23.	U Maung Wai Hla	U Shan Thar Zaw	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
24.	U Shwe Htwan Phru	U Maung Ba Htwan	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
5.	Daw Ma Thein Pan	U Ba Hlaing	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
26.	U Nyi Bu Chay	U Wai Saw Phru	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
27.	Daw Mae Nyo	U Hla Kyaw	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
28.	U Shi Su Aung	U Maung Lone	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
29.	U Maung Ree Than	U Phoe Hla	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	
30.	U Htwan Warm Nu	U Shi Su Aung	Lahargree Village	402	N12	2	

19.

Recommendation

[Official Stamp]

Thay Chaung Village Chairperson
Village Peace and Development Council
Kyaukphru Township

Date: December 29, 2010

Field No. 431 of Kyaikankyin Embankments, with 45 acres of paddy farms that were almost harvested and owned by 30 people from Kapichaung Village of Thay Chaung Village Tract in Kyaukphru Township, was fully destroyed by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010.

There are 12 breaches that are 50 wingspans that have damaged the embankment. Thus, it is recommended to give the support to the 30 owners of the embankments, who are not only suffering difficulties with food and accommodation, but also with repairing the fully damaged embankments.

Heads the embankments:

- 1) Maung Ohm /s/ [Maung Ohm]
- 2) Maung Khin Oo /s/ [Maung Khin Oo]
- 3) Kyaw Than /s/ [Kyaw Than]

/s/ [Htwan Htwan Htaite]

Chairperson

Village Tract Peace and Development Council
Thay Chaung Village Tract, Kyaukphru Township

The length of embankment is 500 wingspans.

The height of embankment is 5 *Taung*.

The basement of embankment is 10 *Taung*.

The expenditure of repairing the embankments would be 2,000,000 Kyat.

Note: 1 *Taung* (Arakanese/ Burmese measurement for length) is equivalent to the length of a hand and forearm, or about 18 inches.

20.

To

All donors

Date: December 21, 2010

Subject: Petition for Assistance to Repairing the Danyinchin Embankment

Danyinchin Embankment (1,764 acres of paddy farms), with an encirclement of 10 miles in Pandawprun Village Tract, is worked by 279 families with 1,877 family members in Shwe Nyo Ma Village Tract in Kyaukphru Township. The embankment and its nearly harvested paddy farms were damaged by Cyclone Giri on October 22, 2010. We, the farmers managed to repair the damaged embankment, but only 7 % was finished within 45 days. And again only 30 % would be completed if we all put our full efforts and workforce to repair the embankment by the end of February. If we cannot finish in time, it is a reality that the farmers would face difficulties not only with food and accommodation, but also they would face difficulties with education and health care. Currently, we are already facing famine. Thus, we are sending this petition for assistance to the relief organisation to give us support which is urgently needed to solve our difficulties.

Embankment Voluntary Patron
Venerable Monk, Wara Buddhi
Head Monk of Shwe Nyo Ma Village

Embankment Chairperson
U Maung Than Aung
(Shwe Myo Ma)

/s/ [Venerable Monk, Wara Buddhi]

/s/ [U Maung Than Aung]

ANNEXURE III: *Interviews in 2012*

Current situation on the Giri affected areas: Two Years On....

Almost all of local and international NGOs had left the communities affected by cyclone Giri after the three months, or when the first phase of the emergency relief was completed.

Generally the victims received little or no support for rebuilding income, from the government or international NGOs. The relief supplies were not equally or fairly distributed among the victims, as most of the relief items from INGOs were gone/ distributed through the government authorities and USDP. This fact created a lot of problems among the villagers.

One or two days after the cyclone, the authorities assigned soldiers from a local artillery corps, from No. 9 Regional Central Training School, to wards and villages of the most affected townships. They inspected strangers and relief donors and also demanded to deliver assistance through their units.

Some of the relief items, particularly rice from local Arakanese community, had to be shared with the army troops or navy bases that served as check points along the waterways. Local donors who did not provide relief items to the soldiers were intimidated and threatened.

Victims in the affected community were also intimidated and threatened by the USDP, if they refused to vote for the government party in the elections. Many cyclone victims were angry with the authorities including USDP members who created news stories for propaganda purposes, by pretending to deliver assistance to the victims. The authorities videotaped and photographed their organized events where they delivered assistance, and later confiscated those items when the cameras were off.

Most of the Giri affected people still live hand to mouth, as they cannot rebuild their broken livelihoods. They would require a certain amount of capital investment to buy fishing boats, nets, agricultural equipment, and the like. This means that it is difficult to rehabilitate their livelihoods without support from the government or (I)NGOs.

This has caused a lot of youth from the affected areas to increasingly migrate to Rangoon, Kachin State and Thailand where they believe they may find job opportunities in gold mines, construction sites, garment factories or fishing industries. The fighting between government and Kachin troops has severely affect these youths who now live in Kachin state. There are hundreds of young migrants in Rangoon, Kachin State and Thailand now.

Two years after Cyclone Giri, schools that were partially or fully damaged have not been renovated or rebuilt yet, due to inadequate support from the government or (I)NGOs. There are not enough teachers and learning materials for these rural primary schools. Most of the families in the affected areas are still unable to send their children to school because those children work to support their parents.

There are very few, even a total lack of, clinics that are able to provide medical support to the affected villagers, especially in the rural areas.

1.

Gender: Male	Place of Interview: Sitetway
Age: 30	Date of interview: October 1, 2012
Profession: Relief worker	Type of interview: Written

Q: Could you explain your experiences on the trip you went on to the most affected areas after the cyclone Giri?.05

A: *We went to the Ingrachai Island including Ngarachai Village in Pauktaw Township for some relief distribution two days after Cyclone Giri. When we arrived there, we saw an Arakanse group from Pauktaw Town, who were distributing some relief supplies mainly rice. And we were the only group from Sitetway for some relief distribution. We stayed 3 days in the island, and there was no (I)NGO or Government support there during that time. So I can say that we were the only local groups, from*

Pauktaw and Sitetway who arrived there one and two days after the cyclone Giri. Unfortunately we were not able to provide enough relief supplies to the victims due to limited relief supplies we had.

Q: On the way to the affected villages, did you have any security problems?

A: *We didn't have any security problems. But we later realized that a lot of troops were deployed in the most affected villages, where the relief items could be easily transported and communication could be managed. Then the army troops ordered that all the relief items from any relief groups need to be distributed through them. This means that at least some of the relief items needed to be shared with the soldiers for army rations.*

Q: Could you tell the current situation in those areas where you went to for relief distribution in 2010?

A: *The situation has been still worse, as the affected communities are not able to rebuild their broken livelihoods to normal. Since the local and international NGOs left, after the first phase of emergency relief, there has been no big support to rebuilding the destroyed livelihoods of affected community. So there are still in needs of support for the communities most affected by Giri in their damaged livelihoods of agriculture and fishing. The partially or fully damaged schools in the affected villages have not been repaired or rebuilt yet, as little or no support from NGOs or the government is provided. The rice production in the Giri affected townships is too low, as most of the agricultural lands in those areas had been submerged with sea water during the cyclone Giri. The situation has been still worse in most Giri affected areas. So there has increased a huge youth migration to Kachin State, Rangoon and Thailand particularly from the most affected townships, including Mraybon, Pauktaw.*

2.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Mae Sot, Thailand

Age: 35

Date of interview: September 25, 2012

Profession: Fisherman

Type of interview: Written

Q: Was your family affected by Cyclone Giri?

A: *Yes of course, our house and fishing equipment were all damaged by the cyclone.*

Q: Did you get any support for your family?

A: *Yes, we did receive some support especially rice for a few weeks and some roofing materials, but we didn't get any support for damage to our fishing equipment.*

Q: Why did you leave the country?

A: *We have had a lot of difficulties rebuilding our family livelihoods, as we lost everything during the cyclone. There are no permanent job opportunities for me and for my family in Kyaukphru. So I left my country to seek better job opportunities in Thailand. I had many challenges along the way to Thailand, as I didn't have enough money to arrive in Mae Sot, Thailand. Like me, there are many youth who left their native villages to find better job opportunities in Burma proper and Thailand.*

Q: Could you explain current situation of Giri affected areas in your township?

A: *Most of the people from the Giri affected areas especially in the rural villages live hand-to-mouth, since they didn't receive enough support for rebuilding their livelihoods. Compared to the rural people, the people from Kyaukphru City who were affected by Giri received more support for rebuilding their livelihoods, but the assistance given is still very limited.*

Q: Did you see or hear anything or any news of support for the schools and monasteries damaged by the cyclone?

A: *Yes I heard that some assistance was given to rebuild the damaged schools and monasteries, but the support given is very limited. So, repairs for most of the schools and monasteries are not finished yet. That affects the education of the children who don't have proper schooling now. In some villages, rebuilding the schools and monasteries were done by the support of Arakanese community, but not from the support from the government or (I)NGOs.*

Q: What do you want to say to the government and INGOs?

A: *As a government, they should give enough support to the affected community of the Cyclone Giri. On the other hand, they should encourage the INGOs to give more humanitarian assistance to the victims of Cyclone Giri for their rebuilding efforts of broken livelihoods of rural folks. And also INGOs themselves should support the affected community in their rehabilitation of broken livelihoods.*

3.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Mraybon Town, Arakan State

Age: 45

Date of interview: October 3, 2012

Profession: Hand-to-mouth

Type of interview: Written

Q: Was your family affected by Cyclone Giri?

A: *Yes, our house was totally damaged, and all our possessions and belongings were lost by the cyclone.*

Q: Did you get any support for your family?

A: *Yes, we did get some assistance especially rice for a few weeks and some roofing materials, but we didn't get any big support to rebuild for our family of 7. Compared to some families from rural villages, we received very little support, as we didn't support the USDP in the elections. The problem is that we supported our national party, the RNDP. So we were not equally distributed the relief items donated by different donors including INGOs.*

Q: How have you been surviving or supporting your family?

A: *Since our family livelihood was totally destroyed by the cyclone, we have had a lot of difficulties for rebuilding our family livelihood, as we have received very little support from the government or INGOs. There is no permanent job opportunity for me and for my other family members here is Mraybon Town. So I could not send my children to school. Worse, my eldest son had to drop out from the high school to help rebuilding of the family livelihood.*

Q: Could you please explain current situation in the town?

A: *Most of the people affected more or less by Giri live hand-to-mouth, especially the people living in the outskirts of the town, since they didn't receive enough support for rebuilding their livelihoods. Compared to the rural people, the Giri affected people from Mraybon Town received more support for rebuilding of their broken livelihoods, but the assistance given is still very limited and are not equally distributed by the USDP and local authorities. Only those who are members and close to the USDP and local authorities have received more support for rebuilding their family livelihoods.*

Q: Did you see or hear anything or any news of support for the schools and monasteries damaged by the cyclone?

A: *Yes I heard that some assistance was given to rebuild some schools and monasteries that were badly damaged, but most of the schools and monasteries have not been fully repaired or rebuilt yet, due to limited and insufficient support. Worse, there are not enough teachers or learning materials, even though some schools are fully rebuilt in the town and certain villages of Mraybon Township. That mainly affects the primary education of the children in badly affected areas.*

Q: What do you want to say to the government and INGOs regarding the current situation on the rebuilding efforts of your family livelihoods and education as well as healthcare?

A: *In my opinion, the local government is fully responsible to support the affected community in the aftermath of any natural disaster. On the other hand, they should encourage the INGOs to give more humanitarian assistance to the victims of the disaster for their rebuilding efforts of broken livelihoods especially in most affected and remote areas of rural villages. And also INGOs themselves should support the affected community in their rehabilitation of broken livelihoods, education and healthcare.*

4.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Prumwun Village, Mraybon Township

Age: 52

Date of interview: September 30, 2012

Profession: Fisherman

Type of interview: Written

Q: Was your family affected by Cyclone Giri?

A: Yes, our house and fishing equipment were terribly destroyed, we didn't have anything left as family possessions or belongings; all were damaged and lost by the cyclone.

Q: Did you get any support for the rebuilding of your family?

A: Yes of course, we did get some emergency assistance especially rice for a month and some roofing materials, but we didn't get any big support as capital investment for the rebuilding of our family livelihood, especially needed for buying fishing equipment such as fishing nets and boats. As you know, it's really difficult to rebuild our broken livelihood without any assistance from the government or (I)NGOs. So we still have many challenges to be able to rebuild our family livelihoods ravaged by the cyclone.

Q: So how do you support your family now?

A: It's really a tough question, not only for me but also other villagers, as nobody from my village has received enough support for rebuilding their family livelihoods. So we are still in need of support for the rebuilding effort of our broken livelihoods.

Q: Could you please explain current situation in your village?

A: As you know, our village was fully damaged, affecting every family in the village. Of course we did get some support for the time of emergency relief period of a few months. But we didn't receive big assistance as capital investment for buying fishing or agricultural equipment to rebuild their broken livelihoods. So, most of the families have had many challenges to rebuild with our family members, since we still don't have big support as capital investment.

Q: Do you have anything to say to the government and INGOs?

A: After any natural disaster, I think any local government is fully responsible to take care of and support their own badly affected citizens. But it's totally different between other countries and in Burma where very little assistance is provided by the government to vulnerable and badly affected communities. Worse [the government] exploited the victims of Cyclone Giri by exchanging some relief items and votes during the elections; for gaining support from uneducated and affected rural folks. I think it's not a good way to take advantage of the people badly affected by the disaster. Instead they should support anyone or any family who are in trouble whether [the victims of the disaster] support to the government or not.

5.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Taunggoat

Age: 48

Date of interview: October 12, 2012

Profession: Teacher and relief worker

Type of interview: Phone

Q: Could you please explain your experiences on the trip you took to the most affected by cyclone Giri?

A: We went to a few villages that were badly affected, and remote areas in Mraybon and Kyaukpghru townships for some relief supplies. On the way to Mraybon Township we were inspected by the army personnel for some questions on where we would go and how many sacks of rice were included in the boat, etc. We were very surprised and angry with the inspection from the army personnel at the time of emergency relief distribution. We went there for not only for the relief supplies but also to check the emergency situation. Actually we brought only very limited relief items, especially rice.

Q: Did you have any difficulty in distributing relief to the affected villagers?

A: Yes of course we had many challenges while distributing relief items among the villages, due to limited relief supplies. But our relief items were equally distributed among the villagers. One thing we realized was that there were many USDP members organizing the cyclone victims in order to get support for the elections, instead of distributing aid to the most in need and vulnerable. In my opinion, it's a kind of exploitation and bribe to the people in order to gain votes of support to the USDP. The problem was that they didn't provide any relief supplies to those who didn't support them, and I think that is one of the human rights violations committed.

Q: Could you please describe the present situation of villages, where you went for relief distribution?

A: The situation has been still worse in the most affected villages in Mraybon and Kyaukphru townships where we went to, as the most affected families didn't get sufficient support as capital investment for the rehabilitation of their broken livelihoods. So the youth from those townships have migrated to Yangon, Kachin State and Thailand to find job opportunities there due to lack of employment in their homes. Worse, there are many children who don't have any proper schooling now, and middle and high school drop-outs in the affected areas have increased. As a teacher, I have big worries for the future of the children and youth in the affected areas. I'm really sorry that I couldn't do anything for them, as I'm an ordinary teacher whose livelihood depends on the tuition fees of the students.

Q: What do you want to say to the government and INGOs?

A: As a government, they are fully responsible to support the affected families who are not still able to rebuild their livelihoods. They should fully support the affected community in their efforts at rebuilding agriculture and fishing. On the other hand, they should give more assistance to repair and rebuild the schools and monasteries damaged during the cyclone, and also have more budget for the rural education and healthcare. Moreover, they should encourage the INGOs to give more humanitarian assistance to the communities most affected and vulnerable in terms of rehabilitating agriculture and fishing, as well as rural education and healthcare.

6.

Name: Aung Htwan Hla

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Prumwun Village, Mraybon

Township

Age: 48

Date of interview: October 15, 2012

Profession: Chairperson of Prumwun Village

Type of interview: Video

Q: Was your village affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: Yes my village, Prumwun was the most affected one in all of villages in Mraybon Township. Before the Cyclone Giri, there were about 400 households in my village. But there were only 17 houses that were also half damaged left after the cyclone. About 70 villagers died during the cyclone while they were fishing in the sea. All fishing equipment including fishing boats and nets, and also all plantation gardens were destroyed.

Q: What is the current situation of the villages' livelihoods?

A: In my village, there are about 3,000 people from whom over 2,000 people are very much facing even their daily survival. There now costs 16,000 (US\$ 15) Kyat for one sack of rice. So the people in my village are hand-to-mouth without having enough rice for daily survival of the long term. To make matters worse, there will be more difficulties in the rainy season that is approaching now: more people who were survived would die after the after cyclone.

Q: What are the current livelihoods of villagers?

A: Before the cyclone, the villagers' livelihoods were fishing in the sea, plantation gardening, etc. But now there were no trees in the gardens, no fishing boats and nets were left. So the villagers have borrowed money from some rich people of other villages and towns with some interest for the rebuilding of the families livelihoods. But they have found it really difficult to return the money owed and interest,

as the catch of fish is too low. So some people cut trees as firewood and sell them in the villages and towns. So almost all of the villagers are still hand-to-mouths now.

Q: Did the relief workers groups arrive in this village?

A: Yes some relief groups arrived in our village, but they all left since May 2010. So there have been no relief groups/ NGOs since after May 2010.

Q: What is current situation of education for the students? Is there any school in your village?

A: There is one primary school donated by the NGOs in our village and there are about 400 students now. But the parents have found it really difficult to be able to buy stationery, umbrellas and walking boots to protect against the rainy season, etc. for their children. There are now 70 middle school students. But there is no middle school in our village, so the primary and middle school students are mixed and have to study together in the existing primary school.

Q: Is there any enough health care to the villagers?

A: For the healthcare of the villagers, there is one nurse provided from Mraybon Town. But I don't think she is able to treat those who are infected and transmitted with malaria and other infected diseases.

7.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Mae Sot

Age: 23

Date of interview: 28 April 2012

Profession: Migrant worker in Thailand

Type of interview: Audio

Q: Where are you from and what was your job when you were in Arakan/Burma?

A: I'm from Khaunglaung Chaung Village in Marmbra Township. Before I came to Thailand, I didn't have any permanent job: I just helped my family after my graduation of middle school (8th standard).

Q: When and why did you come to Thailand?

A: I arrived in Thailand in March 2011. I came to Thailand because all our family businesses including agricultural farming were gone by the Cyclone Giri. So we didn't have anything to do as the family businesses, and so my family had to face lots of difficulties in food, accommodation, etc. And it was really difficult to get a job after the cyclone and so I left for Thailand to find good opportunity of job to help the family.

Q: Can you explain your experience of Cyclone Giri?

A: Most of the houses including our home were destroyed and all the agricultural farming, shrimp farms were also damaged in our village. So many people had to face hunger and famine, and became homeless and jobless.

Q: Were there any relief supplies in your village?

A: Some relief supplies were distributed in our village for the emergency relief phase, but very limited. The relief groups were not able to support the capital investment for the rehabilitation of our businesses including farming and fishing equipment damaged. Of course some people received some support of capital investment, but they were the supporters of the government party, USDP. It is really difficult for many of the villagers to be able to rebuild their broken family livelihoods without any assistance from the government or INGOs. And they have had no other alternative businesses to be created. So many people in villages are still having much difficulty in rebuilding their family livelihoods to normal

Q: What is the current situation of your village?

A: Most of the villagers are still facing much difficulty in their food, health care, education of their children and so on due to losses of their main families' businesses that led to many villagers jobless. The rice production is not still good due to being submerged by the salt water during the cyclone. The rice harvested and received from the many acres of paddy fields didn't cover the needs of many families in terms of food, health care, education, etc. that has been leading to the migration of many youth including myself from our village to Thailand. There are approximately 25 youth who are working as migrant workers in different parts of Thailand from our village alone. And there are many other hundreds

of youths working in Thailand from other villages of my township and other townships of Mraybon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphru that were badly affected by the cyclone. These numbers increased only after Cyclone Giri.

Q: What are the current situations of education and health care in your village?

A: *Actually I don't know much detail about the education and health care in our village, since I left for Thailand more than one year ago. But according to some youth from our village who recently arrived in Thailand, most of the families are not still able send their children to middle and high schools due to lack of income for the expenses of education. For the minor and general health care, the people from our village normally do the treatment by buying medicines from the village shops. But there will be a big problem for the serious and infected diseases such as diarrhea and dysentery, etc., as the treatment in the town and city is really expensive and costly.*

Q: What do you want to say to the government and INGOs?

A: *I want to say to both our government and INGOs that they should support the needy and Giri most affected people in their rebuilding efforts of damaged families' businesses including farming, gardening and fishing. Apart from support for these, they should also give other necessary assistance for the education and health care of rural folks. In fact, I really want to continue high school and university education. But I lost all my dreams, as my parents are poor and my family situation became worse after the cyclone that forced me to come to Thailand to work and help the family.*

8.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Mae Sot

Age: 27

Date of interview: 25 April 2012

Profession: Migrant worker in Thailand

Type of interview: Audio

Q: Where do you come from and what was your job when you were in Arakan/Burma?

A: *I come from Syunray Village in Marmbra Township. Actually I just helped my family work of agricultural farming and housework, as my family is poor. So I didn't have any permanent job since before I left for Thailand to get a job.*

Q: When did you arrive in Thailand and did you have any difficulty along the way to Thailand?

A: *I managed to arrive in Thailand in January 2012. Actually I had a lot of difficulties along the way to Thailand, as I didn't have enough money for the trip to Thailand. So I didn't have a few meals on the way to Thailand. Fortunately I found a very generous woman who helped some money to get to Thailand. Even in Thailand, I didn't get a job in the first money. I just received a job at the garment factory a few months ago. The job is quite fine now.*

Q: Can you tell how much was your village affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: *About 400 houses, almost all cultivated paddy fields, shrimp farming and fish breeding businesses of the village were all destroyed by the cyclone. So many villagers became homeless and jobless. The people from our village are not still able to rebuild their families' businesses of farming and breeding shrimp and fish damaged. They are in needs of support for rebuilding their broken livelihoods to normal.*

Q: Were there any relief groups in your village during and after the cyclone?

A: *Some relief groups arrived in our village, but I didn't know who were who. These groups only were able to give some assistance of emergency relief supplies. The problem was that the relief items distribution were not equally and fairly delivered among the villagers through the village headman. The village authorities took the best items of relief supplies and the villagers were provided the items that are not good in quality.*

Q: What is the current situation of livelihoods in your village?

A: *Only some families in our village were able to rebuild their livelihoods to quite normal and they are quite alright in their families' businesses. But most of the families are still struggling with the rebuilding efforts of their families' livelihoods damaged. The rice production is not good compared to the past*

years, since all the paddy fields were submerged with salt water during the cyclone. So there are dozens of youth from my village who go to Yangon, Thailand and so on to find good opportunities of jobs to help their broken families' livelihoods. There are almost no more youth in our village now.

Q: Do your villagers get any support from the NGOs now?

A: Actually the NGOs left more than 7 months ago. Before that period, there was some support from the NGOs. But the support from them was very limited especially for the capital investment of rebuilding the damaged family livelihoods.

Q: What about current situations of education and health care in your village?

A: There are primary and post-primary (5th- 7th standard) schools in our village. As the expenses of education in Arakan/ Burma are really expensive and costly, most of the families are not able to send their children to school: even now the families have had difficulty in sending their children to primary school. Before the cyclone, some families were able to send their children to high school in other places and town. But there are many families who are not now able to support their children for the education of middle and high schools. Though it's fine for the minor and general health care in the village, there is really a big problem for those who have serious and infected diseases. It's also because the treatment in the town and city is very expensive and costly. So most of the rural families can't afford this treatment cost that leads to loss of many lives in the rural and remote areas.

Q: What do you want to say to the government and international community?

A: In my opinion, the government is fully responsible to help their citizens who are in needs of help for their rebuilding efforts of farming and agricultural. And I want to request that the international community should also give some necessary support to the most Gira affected community in their rebuilding efforts of broken livelihoods. At the same time, both the government and INGOs should provide some assistance for the education and health care of rural folks of Gira most affected community.

9.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Randai Village, Marmbra Township

Age: 43

Date of interview: 21 September 2012

Profession: Farmer

Type of interview: Phone

Q: How much was your village tract affected by the Cyclone Gira?

A: In our village tract, there includes the villages of Kha Maung Taw, Pyaing Taw, Taung Shey Pyin, Thaing Kyet, Randai. Among those villages, over 600 houses were totally destroyed and all the paddy fields including embankments against salt water of protecting the fields, plantation gardens, shrimp farming and so on were also severely damaged. So many people in our village tract became homeless and jobless.

Q: What is the current situation of families' livelihoods in your village tract?

A: The people from our village tract are still facing many difficulties in food, education for their children, health care, etc., and some villagers are still jobless and are living on hand-to-mouth. That means the many villages are not still able to rebuild their broken livelihoods to normal due to lack of capital investment in agricultural farmlands and fishing equipment. That is leading to migration of dozens of youth in our village tract to other places such as Rangoon, Thailand, etc. where they think they could find better job opportunities. So there are very few youth in our village tract now.

Q: Are there any (I)NGOs in your village tract now?

A: Yes there were some NGOs that gave some assistance for the emergency relief phase. At that time, we were quite fine mainly for food, etc., though the relief supplies provided from them were limited. One of the biggest problems was that we had to buy rice from other places, as the rice could not be bought in our area due to inadequate rice production in our area. That means we had to spend much money on buying rice from other places. Some rice/ paddy seeds were provided last year, but we are not sure whether we would be provided paddy seeds for this year. One of the UN Agencies surveyed the Gira most affected people of our village tract and collected list of the names of needy and vulnerable people

to provide fishing equipment including fishing boats and nets. But we are not sure whether this will make the people from our village tract a reality. In fact, many families in our village tract are still in desperate need of help even for their daily food and rebuilding efforts of their broken livelihoods badly damaged.

Q: What is the current situation of education for the children in your village tract?

A: There is only primary education in our village tract. That means the children from our village tract have to continue their middle and high school education in other places after the primary education in their respective villages. But most of the families from our village tract are not able to support their children to pursue the higher education of middle and high schools mostly after the Cyclone Giri. The villagers are now urgently in needs of support for the stationery, school uniforms, walking boots, etc. of their children.

Q: What is the current situation of health care in your village tract?

A: There is only one clinic in our entire village tract. So the clinic is not able to give enough medical treatment of the populations in our village tract. Worse there is almost lack of medicines and qualified and experienced nurses or medics in the clinic. There are many children who are infected with small pox. Now that the rainy season is approaching, we need more medical support to give treatment to those who are infected with diarrhea, dysentery, malaria, and so on, since these kinds of infected diseases in our areas or entire Arakan State are common in the rainy season (June- September).

Q: Do you have anything to say to the government and INGOs?

A: Of course, I really want to say to our government that they should maily give necessary support to the most Giri affected people for the rebuilding efforts of their broken livelihoods. Similarly the international community should also provide some humanitarian assistance to the needy and deprived people of Giri most affected community for the rebuilding efforts in their families' main businesses of agricultural farming and fishing as well as some support for the education and health care of the rural folks. Without any support of capital investment from the government or international community, I'm sure that most and badly affected community will not be able to rebuild their damaged livelihoods to normal.

10.

Gender: Male

Age: 50

Profession: Fishing businessman

Place of Interview: Kyaukphru Town

Date of interview: 25 September 2012

Type of interview: Paper

Q: Where were you when the Cyclone Giri hit Arakan? Was your family affected by the cyclone?

A: Yes I was in Kyaukphru Town during the Cyclone Giri and my family and business were badly affected by the cyclone. I had the business of buying fish, shrimps, etc. in Prumwun Village, Mraybon Township. Two days after the cyclone, I went to Prumwun Village to check my business of fishery products. When I arrived in the village, all of my possessions of two houses, motorboats, fishing nets were gone by the cyclone. Worse two of my daughters living in the village were in famine and I saw there were many corpses floating along the banks of the rivers and the sea. After the cyclone, I had no idea on what to do, as I lost 10 million Kyats (US\$ 10,000) that was spent on my business of buying fish and shrimps.

Q: Are you able to regain your lost business to normal?

A: It's really difficult to regain my business to normal under current situation. I think it may take some time to be able to operate the original situation of my business. Compared to the past years, there is lesser catch of fish in the rivers and sea. Before the cyclone, there were many people who were catching fish in the sea through their fishing paddle boats and motor boats, there are fewer people who are catching fishing now. That means most fishermen in the village are not able to catch fish, since they lost all their fishing boats and nets during the cyclone, and there is also very much lesser fish in the sea now.

So my business of buying fishery products is not workable and profitable as before, since there are very few fishermen, who have owned trawlers to catch huge catch of fish, shrimps, etc. in the sea that severely affects my business.

Q: Compared to the past years, what about this year of catching fish in the sea?

A: The fish in the sea is fewer that the fishermen are able to catch very less fish. That means some certain kinds of fish species normally caught in the sea are not found in this year and the sale of fish is not good and profitable. In Kyaukphru, there are many fishermen who owned small and big trawlers from different areas of Arakan State or Burma proper and even foreign trawlers, and many business people who are doing the fishing business in the past years. But you cannot see many of those business people compared to the past few years, as there are fewer fishermen who have owned big fishing boats and trawlers that can catch much fish and is also lesser fish in the sea.

Q: What is current situation of fishermen and their livelihoods?

A: Actually I usually travel to do the business of the fisheries through sea and land. Almost entire township of Kyaukphru do this fishing business of different kinds including catching big and smaller fish, shrimps, lobsters, etc. Since there are fewer fishermen and is lesser fish stocks in the sea, there are fewer business people of this kind. I can say that 70% of fishermen is decreased in number compared to the past few years. After the cyclone, there is a huge migration of fisher folks from Kyaukphru Township to the places especially to Thailand, where they thought that they are able to find better job opportunities. There are many fishermen who don't have any capital investment in buying their lost fishing boats and nets during the cyclone. So lots of fishermen have become hand-to-mouth now. This severely affects the fishermen livelihoods of social, education and health care.

11.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Kapichaung Village, Kyaukphru Township

Age: 45

Date of interview: 27 September 2012

Profession: Businesswoman

Type of interview: Paper

Q: Was your village affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: Yes our village was quite affected by the cyclone. The roofs of the houses were uprooted and some houses were partially destroyed though houses in our village were not severely damaged. But all the plantation gardens including different kinds of fruit trees and the embankments of the paddy fields were severely damaged and submerged with salt water that still very much affects the decreasing of rice production until this year.

Q: Did you repair the broken embankments during the cyclone? How many embankments does your village have?

A: Actually the embankments were repaired by the support from some NGOs. There were only three embankments in our entire village. But a rich person, who did the salt business there, owns two. But the embankment of the salt field was destroyed by the cyclone. So the fields can't be grown rice now due to salty soil. There is only one embankment for village owned now to protect against the salt water from the sea.

Q: Is it sufficient with the rice produced by your village for the people in the village?

A: Actually, the village can't produce enough rice for the needs of the population in the village. And even our village was not able to produce adequate rice when there were three embankments for the paddy fields of the village. So how can the only one embankment be able to produce enough rice for the population needs of the village! So the rice production from our village has covered only one-third for the total population over 1,000 villagers: the rice needed for the two-third of entire population in the village is bought from Kyaukphru Town.

Q: What is the current situation of livelihoods in your village?

A: As businesswoman in the village, it's not good for the sale of households needs including rice. That means the people in our village have become poorer, severely affecting the economy of village. So there

are fewer people in the village: many people are moving now to the places where they are able to find better opportunities of jobs. Many youth from our village are going to Thailand, Malaysia, etc. for finding better jobs there. The people in our village are now selling vegetables, cutting firewood, catching fish that are sold in other villages and Kyaukphru. So most people in our village are hand-to-mouth now.

Q: What is the current situation of health care in your village?

A: My village has a clinic donated under the Shwe Gas Project after the Cyclone Giri. But there is no medicine and medics or nurses for this clinic. We have to go to Kyaukphru for even general health care and minor treatments of unhealthy ones. There are many children who are infected with disease of small pox that is spreading to many others. The villagers have found it really difficult to save much money for both food and health care. Worse there is no general health care and so the people in the village are lack of medical knowledge. And there is no education for how to systematically use the toilets that were provided by some NGOs. There are only two toilets in our entire village. So the villagers are going to the forest nearby the village to clean their stomach that may affect the health of the people.

Q: What is the current situation of education in your village?

A: There is one primary school and an unofficial middle school. But the schools are not in good condition, and there are not enough teachers and teaching materials. The villagers have to support the teachers who are provided by the government, as the salary given by the government for the teachers are not met with or satisfactory to the needs of the teachers for their families. There are 7 middle school students in the village, but these students will not continue their education, as their parents are not able to support them due to the difficulty of paying the school fees and other expenses of 700,000 Kyats (US\$ 875) for each individual student of his/her education in Kyaukphru.

Q: What other difficulties do you have now?

A: There is really a big difficulty in our village that we have been facing a huge shortage of drinking and tap water. The current pool in our village cannot provide enough water for the needs of the villagers. Other wells and pool in our village are not in good condition to get drinking water due to bad smell from water.

Q: What do you want to say to the government and international community regarding your needs?

A: I'd like to say that our government is fully responsible to provide any assistance for the needs of the people especially in terms of education and health care in the rural areas. And also I'd like to urge and request the international community that they should give the humanitarian assistance to the rural folks for their needs of rural development such as education, health care, sanitation, etc.

12.

Gender: Male
Township

Place of Interview: Kanyaindaw Village, Kyaukphru

Age: 40

Date of interview: 22 September 2012

Profession: Fishing businessman

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many family members do you have?

A: There are 10 people in my family: they are my wife's parents, who are over 70 now, and the rest are my four sons, two daughters, my wife and myself. Some of my children are early teenagers, my eldest daughter is only 18 years old and the youngest son is only 2 years old now.

Q: Was your family affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: My family was badly affected by the cyclone. My house was partially damaged and all the rice stored was destroyed. So my entire family was in big trouble for food and accommodation. And worse all our almost cultivated paddy fields were destroyed. I was mentally and physically affected for how to provide food to my children including 4 months old son, my youngest one and aged father and mother in laws during and after the cyclone.

Q: How have you survived since the Cyclone Giri?

A: Since after the cyclone, we've been facing a lot of difficulties including a huge famine for weeks. We are a poor family of 10 family members. We received some support for only a few months. During that time of support, we were fine with the food. After 6 months, we were to struggle our lives with hand-to-mouth. Some paddy seeds for coming year of 2011 provided by some NGOs were not matched to grow in our fields that were under salt water. So the rice production was not good at that year. Some rice/paddy harvested from our paddy fields had to be returned for rent of farming animals. Presently we are surviving on hand-to-mouth.

Q: What about the education of your children?

A: We are not able to send our children to school any longer. My eldest daughter had to drop out from school since primary education to help the family. In 2010, two of my sons studying in 5 and 6 Grade had to drop out, as they were in need of assistance for their family. Even now, we are not able to send them back to school, since we are not still able to support for their education. Currently we have only one daughter who is now studying in the 4th standard. We're now very much worried that we're not able to send our youngest son to school due to our lack of income.

Q: What about the general health care for your family?

A: My mother-in-law's eyes were not healthy after the cyclone, as she felt unclear of the eyesight. Luckily other our family members don't have any serious health problems. We just buy medicines from the village shop for minor general healthcare. But this will be a real problem for the serious and infected diseases of my family members and other villagers, since there are no experienced and qualified nurses in our village.

Q: Do you have anything to say to the government and INGOs?

A: Yes of course, I want to say our government that they should give necessary support to the poor who are in desperate need of help in rebuilding their broken livelihoods, as the government is fully responsible to protect and support its own citizens in their immediate needs of assistance. At the same time, I'd like to request that the INGOs should support the Giri affected community for their needs of rebuilding efforts including education and health care especially for the rural folks. I think the affected community has found it really difficult to rebuilt their smashed livelihoods during the cyclone without any assistance from the government or international community.

13.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Kaduchin Village, Kyaukphe Township

Age: 47

Date of interview: 28 September 2012

Profession: Farmer

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many members are there in your family do you have?

A: There are seven family members including my eldest daughter's family plus my two other daughters and one son. We are living together as a big family.

Q: Is your husband is still alive?

A: No, he died since after the three months of my youngest son's birth. It's now been five years of his death.

Q: How do you struggle with your livelihood?

A: We are famers since our ancestors. So we can only work in the farms. As we didn't have anyone to fully work for the farms since after my husband's death, I told my daughter and her husband to live and work together with us in the farms. Our income for entire family is now good, as the only work of our whole family depends on working in the farms. So the only source of income for my family has become working in the farm that cannot sufficiently support our big family. The rest of my daughters and son are all students to whom we have to support in their education. My eldest daughter has a female child who is similar age as my youngest son, and so my granddaughter needs to be sent to school this year together with my youngest son.

Q: How much was your family affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: My family members were not injured, but our house was partially damaged and our rice stored for 6 months was destroyed by the cyclone. And also our almost cultivated paddy fields were totally damaged and submerged with salt water by the cyclone. So our family was in trouble for famine after the cyclone.

Q: What is the current situation your family livelihood?

A: We don't have any enough income for entire family, as farming in the farms is the only work of our family. So we have to work with whatever job we get to feed our family. And even the school children have to work during the summer to help their family. I'm really sorry and feel sympathized my children that they have tried to save some money for their school expenses during their school holidays. If they can't save themselves for their education expenses, I'm sure we would not be able support them for their education.

Q: What is the current situation of their education now?

A: There are four students: my two daughters are in the 6th and 8th standard, and my youngest son and granddaughter are in the kindergarten in this year now. Since there is no official middle school in our village, I will have to send my 8th standard daughter to another place. So more money is needed for her education, and I don't know what to do for the education of my children now as long as the school season is approaching. As you know, the education expenses in Burma are really expensive. So most of the ordinary families can't afford to send their children to school. Instead, the parents often force their children to leave the school and let them help their family.

Q: Do you have anything to say to the government and NGOs?

A: Actually I don't know how and what to say to the government for our needs of support. But one thing in my mind is that the government should support us and other poor people in their families' rebuilding efforts. Similarly the NGOs and the international community should also give some humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable and Giri affected community in their needs of rebuilding efforts as well as the needs of education and health care especially to those who are living in the remote and rural areas.

14.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Prai Daung Village, Pauktaw Township

Age: 45

Date of interview: 12 October 2012

Profession: Fisherman

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many family members do you have?

A: I have a seven member family. There are three sons, two daughters, my wife and myself.

Q: What is your job?

A: I'm a fisherman. My family fishes in the rivers and sea. We don't do anything apart from our fishing business.

Q: Your village is situated on the western bank of Pharongar Island in the Bay of Bengal; how did the Cyclone Giri affect your family?

A: We are still being affected by the cyclone, as all our fishing boats, nets and house were totally damaged. Also our animals such as chickens and pigs died, but we were fortunate to have survived by barely escaping death during the cyclone. It's because I had a radio and so I knew that there would be a cyclone, but I didn't know how strong the cyclone was. Even though I knew there would be a cyclone, we had to go fishing in the sea, as we are just an ordinary family depending on the income from the fishing business. But we didn't go fishing very far away from the shore. A few hours before the cyclone hit the Arakan Coast, we returned to the shore, so we escaped the cyclone. But we suffered the loss of all our possessions including our fishing equipment and home. Since our village is quite away from the city and the transportation and communication are not good, the relief groups couldn't easily arrive in our village. So the people in our village endured hunger and famine.

Q: Did you get any support from the government or NGOs?

A: Yes we received some support but the assistance was mainly from local NGOs and the community. The USDP only gave support to those who voted for them of general elections. It's not fair as we are all the same victims of Cyclone Giri. So most of the villages had many problems due to unfair distribution of relief items, especially by the USDP.

Q: What is the current livelihood of your family?

A: One of my sons and I went fishing in the sea using the fishing boats and nets we had, and another one of my sons caught crabs in the sea before the cyclone. We could provide enough income for the needs of the family. Since we lost everything during the cyclone, I'm now working on other people's fishing boats. I can't even rebuild my house damaged by the cyclone yet. So I had to build my home with some hardwood from nearby mangrove forests. One of the problems is that the income received and the expenditure, including general expenses for the family, has not been met.

Q: What about your two sons who are working for the family; are they students?

A: My eldest son is 18 and the second one is 15. Actually they didn't even finish the primary education. We could not send them to school, as we are an ordinary and poor family. They have had to work together with me for the family since early teenagers.

Q: Are there any students in your family?

A: There are two students: one is in the 4th standard and another is the 2nd standard. My youngest daughter was a small child during Giri. We forced our eldest daughter to leave the school to look after her sister and help her mother with housework. It's not that easy to be able to send two students to school, as the cost for education in Burma is very expensive.

Q: What is the current situation of health care in your family, and also how is the general health care in your village?

A: In my family, everyone except my wife. Actually my wife often feels unhealthy, since she was terribly affected by the cyclone; she had given birth to my youngest son only a few months before. We usually buy medicines from the village shop, as treatment for general health care, but if the diseases are serious, we have to go to general hospitals in a town or city, which is very costly.

Q: What would you like to say to the government and INGOs?

A: I'd like to say mainly to our government that they are fully responsible to support the vulnerable and badly affected cyclone victims in their rebuilding efforts. Similarly, I'd like to request that the international community should support the needy rural people in terms of education and health care. Without any support from the government or INGOs, we've found it really difficult to rebuild our damaged livelihoods to normal.

15.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Ohmdaw Chaung Village, Pauktaw Township

Age: 62

Date of interview: 29 September 2012

Profession: Farmer

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many family members do you have?

A: I have seven family members including my two grand children.

Q: What is your job?

A: I'm a farmer and working in the farms is my family's main job. Our primary income for entire family comes from farming agricultural products, especially rice. Also, the livelihoods of other people in my village are farming and gardening, while very few people rely on fishing.

Q: How much were your family and village affected by the Cyclone Giri, and talk about the paddy fields that were damaged?

A: Actually my village was not that much affected, where only about 100 houses were partially damaged. But almost all cultivated paddy fields and embankments, which protect against salt water, were severely damaged. The families in my village, including my family, had to face hunger and famine for a few days during and after the cyclone.

Q: Did you get any assistance from the government or INGOs?

A: Yes, we were fine when some relief groups, mostly local ones, arrived in our village to provide some relief supplies. But these groups didn't give support for long and the relief supplies were not fairly or equally distributed, which was mainly done by the USPD which only gave support to those who supported them in the elections. So the villages were exploited and cheated with some relief supplies. I think it's not fair, as we all were affected by the cyclone.

Q: What are the current livelihoods of your villagers?

A: Most of the villages are facing much difficulty with working the farms that were submerged with salt water during the cyclone. That damage still affects the production of rice. Compared to the past few years before the cyclone, the rice production is not good now; the production has decreased as much as one third compared to the past years. We have to store this rice mainly as food, which seriously affects other sectors of the family such as education, health care, and social life. Having enough rice and other basic needs such as cooking oil, chili, and fish paste is really important for the farmers during harvest time and the rainy season. But most of the farmers do not have adequate rations for basic needs of food due to poverty.

Q: Which is the current situation of education for your children?

A: We are not able to support the education needs of our children, including school uniforms and stationery. There are not enough teachers or learning materials in the schools, especially in the rural villages.

Q: What is the current situation of health care in your village?

A: In my village, there is no problem for general health care. But there is a huge problem for serious and infectious diseases such as diarrhea. As there is no clinic in my village, the villagers with serious and infectious diseases have to go to the town and city for the treatment, which is really costly and expensive.

Q: What do you want to say to the government and international community?

A: Both our government and the international community should support the affected community with their serious needs and rebuilding efforts. Without any support or capital investment from the government or INGOs, I'm sure we are not able to rebuild our broken livelihoods to normal.

16.

Gender: Male

Age: 56

Profession: Farmer

Place of Interview: Ngaree Chai Village, Pauktaw Township

Date of interview: 21 September 2012

Type of interview: Paper

Q: Could you please share your experiences during Cyclone Giri and current situation of your village?

A: I helped working for the relief groups who came to my village with some relief supplies for distribution. Yes I would share you with what I had experienced during the cyclone. On this island of Ingrachai, the villages of Bryai Thait, Kyauk Maung, Ngaree Chai, Thay Khway and Ngamay Brum were severely affected by the cyclone. Almost all the houses, almost cultivated paddy fields, plantation gardens, fishing equipment were severely damaged in those villages. Worse the people from those villages had to face much hunger and famine for days until the relief groups arrived in those villages. The people from those villages are still suffering the serious affect of the cyclone and still have difficulties with rebuilding their broken livelihoods to normal.

Q: Could you tell what kinds of consequences you have had so far?

A: Actually the people from the villages of Ingrachai Island were not much better before the cyclone. But the situation of hundreds of family livelihoods has become worse after the cyclone, as all the primary businesses of fishing, farming, gardening disappeared during the cyclone. Most of the damaged houses are not still yet fully repaired or rebuilt, as the people of many villages in this island are still struggling with their daily survival, mainly for food.

Q: Was there any support from the government, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in those villages?

A: Yes, there were some organisations who gave some emergency support to the affected communities, but the assistance provided was very limited and not equally distributed. Most of the people from this island were exploited by the USDP in exchange of food supplies and votes in the general elections; the local people are not educated or knowledgeable. No big support of capital investment was provided by the government or INGOs. So the people from this island have still been facing much difficulty with their rebuilding efforts.

Q: What is the current situation for the education of children on this island?

A: Every village on this island has a primary school, but there are not enough teachers or teaching materials. After their primary education, most of the children are not able to continue their middle or high school education, as they have to help their families. High school and university students are rarely found in the villages.

Q: What is the current situation of health care in those villages?

A: There are some medics and nurses on the island, but they don't permanently live on the island due to family difficulties, so there is no adequate treatment for even general health care. Even if there were few nurses and medics on the island, there is not enough medicine to treat serious or infectious diseases.

Q: Do you have anything to say to the government or international community?

A: In my opinion, both the government and INGOs should give some humanitarian aid to those of us who were badly affected by the cyclone. I think it's not possible to rebuild our broken livelihoods without any big long term assistance of capital investment for the badly affected communities, who are mainly rural folks.

17.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Prai Daung Village, Pauktaw

Township

Age: 45

Date of interview: 7 September 2012

Profession: Fisherman and relief worker

Type of interview: Paper

Q: Could you share your experience with helping the distribution of relief amongst the villages in your village tract, and describe the current situation of those villages?

A: As the Prai Daung Village Tract is situated on the western bank of Pharongar Island, in the Bay of Bengal, the people were severely affected by the Cyclone Giri, and almost all the houses, fishing equipment, agricultural farmlands and plantation gardens were also badly damaged. During the three month emergency relief phase, the people from our village tract received some relief supplies, so there was very little famine in our village tract.

Q: What are the jobs of the villagers in your village tract?

A: The main livelihoods in our village tract are fishing and selling firewood.

Q: Did you get any support during and after the cyclone?

A: Yes, we got some support from some NGOs. It's really a shame that the government provided very little support to the affected communities. The USDP gave more support to the villagers who voted for them, which created a lot of problems among the villagers. I heard that most of other villages in our township faced similar situations and problems. It was not a fair distribution to the victims of the cyclone.

Q: What are the current situations of livelihoods in your village's tract in term of business, food, etc.?

A: As the main job of our village's tract is fishing, the people from our village tract are still not able to rebuild their destroyed livelihoods due to the loss of their fishing equipment. So the business in our village's tract is still not okay. I think it'll be really difficult to be able to rebuild the livelihoods of our village tract to without any capital investment from the government or INGOs, mainly for buying fishing equipment. So the people from our village's tract are still facing difficulties in rebuilding their damaged livelihoods.

Q: What is the current situation of education in your village tract?

A: The children who graduated from the primary school of our village tract are not able to study their middle or high school education in other places after the Cyclone Giri, as their parents are still struggling. Most of the children in our village's tract have to leave the school and help rebuilding efforts. There are 3 unnamed villages, with 20 to 30 households, on the way to Prai Daung and Kular Tay villages. Those 3 villages were not provided relief during the cyclone, as there are no official names of the villages. Those villages are now facing the worst situation. There are no primary schools, so the children from those villages are not able to study their primary education.

Q: What do you want to say to the government and NGOs?

A: I think both our government and international community should give any necessary support to the most affected communities to rebuild their broken livelihoods, as well as support important needs of education and health care for the rural people. Without any assistance, such as capital investment, our villagers are not able to rebuild their livelihoods.

18.

Gender: Male

Place of Interview: Koranprum Village, Mraybon Township

Age: 45

Date of interview: 18 September 2012

Profession: Farmer

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many children do you have?

A: I have three children.

Q: So they are they all students?

A: Yes two are primary students and one is middle school or secondary school student.

Q: What is your family's livelihood?

A: Our family livelihood is farming and we don't do anything apart from farming. Everyone in our village is a farmer.

Q: Was your family affected by the Cyclone Giri?

A: Yes our house was totally destroyed and all of our paddy fields were also damaged by salt water from broken embankments, while they were nearly ready for cultivation. We faced famine during that time. About 70 houses in our village were severely damaged. So all the people of our village had really a hard time and so did the students who were not able to attend the school because it was damaged. I think I will not be able to send my son to middle school due to insufficient income. Instead I told my son to help rebuild our farming livelihood.

Q: What is your current situation of family's livelihood?

A: We've been facing a lot of difficulties for even daily survival, as we haven't had any income apart from farming since the nearly ripe paddy fields were destroyed. We just live hand-to-mouth now and so we are not able to repair the damaged embankments. We will not be able to plough our paddy fields since we don't have enough income for paddy seeds, or to make repairs. I have 3 children to send to school, but I don't think I will be able to send them due to lack of additional income for their education. We still facing difficulties to daily survival.

Q: Didn't the relief groups come to your village?

A: Yes some relief organisations and NGOs came to our village during the emergency time of relief distribution. But they all left after three months of emergency relief phase. So we haven't received any

support including any capital investment for our agricultural farmlands submerged with salt water during the cyclone, etc. since then.

19.

Gender: Male
Township

Place of Interview: Kyauknganaw Village, Mraybon

Age: 52

Date of interview: 15 October 2012

Profession: Farmer and fisherman

Type of interview: Paper

Q: How many children do you have?

A: *I have five children: two sons and three daughters.*

Q: What is your family livelihood?

A: *Before the cyclone, I worked as a farmer and fisherman, but now I can only farm, since I lost all my equipment, including boats and nets during the cyclone. I am not able to fish, because I cannot afford to buy that equipment due to lack of capital investment. So my family now has less income than before and we cannot feed the entire family of 7.*

Q: What of your family's was damaged during the cyclone?

A: *As I mentioned earlier, we've lost our fishing equipment, house and farming animals. Also, we lost 5 acres of ripe paddy fields.*

Q: What is current situation of your family livelihood?

A: *We are fine for living now, since we repaired our damaged house by our own way. But we've found it really difficult to plough our farms, as we don't have enough farming animals and seeds. Even last year, we had to plough our farms with the cows borrowed from others. But now we have fewer cows for ploughing our farms and we are not able to buy some cows due to lack of income for the expenses of buying some farming animals. We are almost hand-to-mouth now, and so we are not able to send our children to schools. The eldest ones had to dropout from school for helping the family livelihood. I have no idea on what to do for the education of my children now.*

20.

Gender: Male
Age: 56

Place of Interview: Mraybon Town

Date of interview: 25 September 2012

Profession: RNDP MP and farmer

Type of interview: Phone

Q: How much did Cyclone Giri affect Mraybon Township?

A: *All the houses, fishing equipment and agricultural farmlands in both rural and urban areas were damaged by the cyclone. Many people died and the schools were also destroyed. Many parents still have not been able to send their children to schools due to lessened family income. What's worse is that most of middle and high schools students had to dropout to help repair their family's damaged livelihoods.*

Q: What is current situation now?

A: *The people from our township are still facing the daily survivals of their families. And they are not able to rebuild their broken family livelihoods in terms of farming and agricultural equipment. The paddy seeds received from some NGOs are used up as food, since they don't have enough rice for food. Worse the rice production is not good as before due to salt water during the cyclone.*

Q: We heard that some NGOs provided assistance to repair the natural embankments to the paddy fields, is that true?

A: *Yes it's true that some assistance was provided by some NGOs for repairs to the embankments, in order to protect against salt water. But the assistance was not enough and so the townspeople have been doing the repairs their own way.*

Q: What is current situation of fishermen in this township?

A: The income from the fishing industry is not as good as before, due to diminished catches. There are fewer fishermen because many of the fishermen in this township are not able to replace lost fishing equipment. Most of the fishermen are now working at whatever job they can get. Most of the people in the badly affected villages of Mraybon Township are still facing problems. So most of the affected families are not able to rebuild their broken livelihoods.

Q: What about the NGOs or INGOs now?

A: There are now two NGOs working for the affected community here in the township, but their support is really limited and do not cover all of Mraybon township. So the badly affected community don't receive enough support to be able to rebuild their broken livelihoods.

Q: What about current situation of education in Mraybon Township?

A: There are many difficulties for the education of the students. One of the present problems is that many students are studying their middle school education in their existing primary schools. But the government won't allow the 8th standard students to study in the primary schools, so the 8th standard students from rural villages are not able to study at all due to expensive tuition fees and cost of stationery in the towns and cities. Many high school students receive no support for their education from their parents, due to the lessened families' income. In general, most of the affected families are still not able to send their children to schools due to higher expenses with buying school uniforms, tuition fees, stationery, and rain boots. These problems cause hundreds of students to leave or dropout from the schools in order to provide assistance to their families.

Q: What about the current situation of general health care in this township?

A: Public health care is very important for all people. More importantly health care is essential and necessary to those living in the remote areas, which is very much less developed compared to the urban areas. Now the rural folks have to come to towns and cities for their health care, which is really expensive for them: most of the villagers cannot afford both the medical and travel expenses for the treatment.

21.

Gender: Female

Place of Interview: Prumwun Village, Mraybon Township

Age: 30

Date of interview: 2 October 2012

Profession: Fisherwoman

Type of interview: Paper

Q: Where were you during Cyclone Giri? Can you share your experiences during the cyclone?

A: My family and I were in our village, Prumwun, during the Cyclone Giri. All of my family members and the people next to my house were hiding together in this hill for our safety. Unfortunately all our houses and fishing equipment, including fishing boats and nets, were totally destroyed though we were lucky and survived. We shared insufficient food with many people until two days before the relief groups arrived in our village. We really had a hard time for our survival at that time.

Q: What were your family's livelihoods?

A: We caught fish in the sea before the Cyclone Giri. But we lost everything during the cyclone. So we are now surviving with whatever work we get. We are not able to buy the fishing equipment of boats and nets, as the family income is still very limited and insufficient for buying that equipment.

Q: How many family members do you have?

A: We have three family members. My only daughter has been sent to school. But we don't have enough money to buy stationery. It's really difficult to get the job that we want. There are also other villagers who live the same lives as us. That means we are all hand-to-mouth right now.

Q: What does your husband do now?

A: Before the cyclone, he caught fish in the sea, but now we lost everything during the cyclone. He has to work as a woodcutter for the logging business of some rich people for income and he looks for firewood for our family. The daily income of my work and my husband's doesn't cover the daily survival

needs of our family, as the rice and other household needs are becoming expensive now. So we are just hand-to-mouth now.

Q: What are the current needs for your family?

A: *We are urgently in need of support for buying some sacks of rice, cooking oil, chili, salt, and fish paste before the rainy season, as it's really difficult to work during the rainy season. We also need some support for the general medical health care of our family, and we want to send our child to school, but I don't think we are able to do so during this dire situation.*

ANNEXURE IV: Timeline

19 Oct. 2010	Rakhine State put on high alert. ²
21 Oct.	Evacuations by MRCS and Government; insufficient preparation by (I)NGOs and UN - no stockpiles review and no Emergency Needs Assessment plan. ³
22 Oct.	Cyclone Giri makes landfall on the west coast of Arakan State, with wind speeds of 120-160mph (193-257 km/h); The <i>Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System</i> (GDACS) issues a redalert for a high risk of humanitarian impact.
23 Oct.	INGOs arriving in Sitetway for emergency relief operations;INGOs present in the area includeMRCS, MSF-Holland, ACF, <i>Malteser</i> , <i>Save the Children</i> , UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNDP; SPDC Ministers <i>Thein Swe</i> (Transport), <i>Maung Maung Swe</i> (Social Welfare, Relief, Resettlement), <i>Phone Swe</i> (HomeAffairs) visit Kyaukphru.
24 Oct.	PM <i>Thein Sein</i> attends 65 th UN anniversary and talks of Cyclone Nargis, but fails to mentionCyclone Giri; DMH reports Giri has weakened to a tropical depression; informal cluster system activated.
25 Oct.	State media confirm 27 killed in Kyaukphru and Mraybon townships, with a further 15 still missingin Mraybon; rapid assessment teams were dispatched by UN agencies and INGOs; non-state media report of international NGO staff unable to leave Sitetway and access cyclone affected areas as they await the necessary travel permits.
26 Oct.	The four most affected areas are Kyaukphru, Mraybon, Marmbra and Pauktaw; US pledges US\$100,000 in aid; informal emergency shelter cluster convened. ⁴
27 Oct.	RNDP send official letter calling on the UEC to postpone voting in the November 7 general electionin Mraybon, Kyaukphru and Manaung Townships.
28-29 Oct.	A RC/HC, UNHCR, UNDP and OCHA delegation travels to Sitetway to meet UN, (I)NGO representatives and hold discussions with government Ministers in charge of the responseefforts; a UN delegation visitsome affected areas in Pauktaw Township.
29 Oct.	Official figures say 45 people confirmed dead, 70,975 have been made homeless; local relief workers say the death toll is actually over 100.
30 Oct.	RNDP appeal to international community for assistance to Cyclone Giri survivors.
1 Nov	RC/HC requests the Emergency Relief Coordinator to activate the cluster system. ⁵
3-4 Nov.	<i>Thein Sein</i> visits Kyaukphru, Pauktaw, Sitetway, but focuses on his election campaign.
5 Nov	Cluster system formerly activated and first inter-cluster meeting held. ⁶
7 Nov.	First election in 20 years sees a national victory for the government-backed USDP.
13 Nov.	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest.
15 Nov.	4 assessment teams (GRC, local NGOs, incl. Community Development Association, Ar Yone Oo Relief and Development, and Mercy Corps) visit Kyaukphru, Mraybon, Pauktaw, and Marmbra. ⁷
16 Nov.	Japan has offered US\$500,000 for the delivery of food aid through the WFP.
19 Nov.	SPDC officials throughout Mon State order households to each donate 1,000 kyat (US\$1.00) for survivors in Arakan State.

20 Nov.	Australia announces that it will provide around US\$3 million.
22 Nov.	First general appeal to donors by the member organisations of the various clusters. ⁸
24 Nov.	PM <i>Thein Sein</i> 's second visit to Mraybon, Kyaukphe and Sitetway; <i>Daw Aung San Suu Kyi</i> donates 3.9 million kyat (US\$ 3,900) in Mraybon and Pauktaw Townships.
25 Nov.	US donate \$3 million.
30 Nov.	UN: an estimated US\$53 million is required for the emergency and early recovery.
13-15 Dec.	RC/HC, UNHCR, WFP with the OCHA head of office visit the affected areas ⁹ .
14 Dec.	<i>Daw Aung San Suu Kyi</i> donates a further 10 million kyat (\$10,000).
17 Dec.	Cluster Leads agree to develop recovery action plan. ¹⁰
20 Dec.	OCHA report that only \$20.5 million of aid has been received, just 35% of the \$57 million required for the emergency and early recovery phases of the disaster.
21 Dec.	European Commission has allocated almost US\$4 million in humanitarian relief.
22 Dec.	Committee Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) secretary and ALD general secretary <i>Aye Tha Aung</i> offer support and report on the situation in the affected area.
30 Dec.	Burma's pro-democracy leaders, including <i>Daw Aung San Suu Kyi</i> , call on the international community to provide more aid.
31 Dec.	A New Year concert in Thingangyun Township raises over 10 million kyats (\$10,000)
10 Jan.	Shelter cluster ended, responsibility passed to <i>Habitat</i> -led Shelter Working Group. ¹¹
11 Jan.	US announces it will provide an additional US\$1.5 million in aid through the WFP.
13 Jan.	End of emergency phase and beginning of early recovery phase.
28 Jan.	UN calls for more funds.
10 Feb.	Last inter-cluster meeting. ¹²
17 Feb.	Saudi Arabia's Prince <i>Alwaleed Bin Talal</i> donates US\$50,000.
13-14 Mar.	16,000 fishermen stranded in the Andaman Sea when DMH fails to predict a tropical storm, prompting <i>Tun Lwin</i> (ex-DMH head) to call for government purchase of radar.
19 Mar.	Burmese film stars and singers take part in a fund raising concert in Rangoon.
25-29 Apr.	Fund raising painting exhibition, entitled " <i>The Givers</i> ", in Rangoon.

ANNEXURE V: 20 most devastating Cyclones striking Arakan

No.	Date	Local Name ¹³	No.	Date	International
1.	14 May 1884	Sitetway	13.	19 May 1992	BOB 01
2.	7 May 1923	Maungdaw	14.	21 November 1992	Forrest
3.	19 May 1926	Sitetway	15.	20 November 1994	BOB 01
4.	5 May 1930	Kyaukphe	16.	11 May 2002	02B
5.	26 April 1936	Kyaukphe	17.	19 May 2003	01B
6.	8 October 1949	Sitetway	18.	19 May 2004	BOB 01
7.	24 October 1952	Kyaukphe	19.	28 April 2006	Mala
8.	22 September 1967	Sitetway	20.	22 October 2010	Giri
9.	16 May 1967	Sitetway			
10.	10 May 1968	Sitetway ¹⁵			
11.	18 May 1978	Kyaukphe			
12	5 May 1982	Gwa			

¹ A *longyi* is a sheet of [cloth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longyi) worn in [Burma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma) around the waist, running to the feet. It is held in place by folding fabric over, without a knot. It is also sometimes folded up to the knee for comfort. "Longyi", *Wikipedia*, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longyi>) accessed on 1 Jan. 2012.

² Kerren Hedlund, "*Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation: Cyclone Giri Response October 2010 to January 2011 - IFRC*", July 2011, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Asia%20Pacific/IFRC%20ESC%20Giri%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf#> accessed on 8 Dec. 2011.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Kerren Hedlund, "*Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation: Cyclone Giri Response October 2010 to January 2011 -*

IFRC”, July 2011, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Asia%20Pacific/IFRC%20ESC%20Giri%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf#> accessed on 8 Dec. 2011.

⁵ “Post Giri Consolidated Action Plan”, OCHA, 15 Feb. 2011, <http://themimu.info/CycloneGiri/index.php> accessed on 21 Dec. 2011.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Aye Sapay Phyu, “Aid groups shift focus to cyclone recovery”, *MMT*, 22-28 Nov. 2010, <http://www.mmmtimes.com/2010/news/550/news55002.html> accessed on 21 Dec. 2011.

⁸ Kerren Hedlund, “*Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation: Cyclone Giri Response October 2010 to January 2011* - IFRC”, July 2011, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Asia%20Pacific/IFRC%20ESC%20Giri%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf#> accessed on 8 Dec. 2011.

⁹ “Post Giri Consolidated Action Plan”, OCHA, 15 Feb. 2011, <http://themimu.info/CycloneGiri/index.php> accessed on 21 Dec. 2011.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Kerren Hedlund, “*Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation: Cyclone Giri Response October 2010 to January 2011* - IFRC”, July 2011, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Asia%20Pacific/IFRC%20ESC%20Giri%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf#> accessed on 8 Dec. 2011.

¹² “Post Giri Consolidated Action Plan”, OCHA, 15 Feb. 2011, <http://themimu.info/CycloneGiri/index.php> accessed on 21 Dec. 2011.

Statement on the early warning/protection of natural disasters by U Kyan Htun (Minister of Social Affairs of Arakan state), “Development”, *RNDP*, Vol.1, No. 8, 19 Oct. 2011, 5; 20th Century Asian Natural Disasters Data Book, ADRC, August 2002, http://www.adrc.asia/publications/databook/ORG/databook_20th/MMR.pdf accessed on 18 Sept. 2011.

¹³ “List of tropical cyclones that affected Burma”, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tropical_cyclones_that_affected_Burma accessed on 7 Nov. 2011.

¹⁴ The 1968 Sitetway Cyclone was the most severe one, where 9 out of 17 townships were severely affected, leaving about 1,000 people and approximately 20,000 farming animals dead. Statement on the early warning/protection of natural disasters by U Kyan Htun (Minister of Social Affairs of Arakan state), “Development”, *RNDP*, Vol.1, No. 8, 19 Oct. 2011, 5.

Endnotes

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- 2 The term cyclone is derived from the Greek word ‘*kyklos*’ meaning circle. A cyclone is an area of low pressure with strong winds blowing around a centre in an anticlockwise direction in the Northern Hemisphere (clockwise direction in the Southern Hemisphere) originating above the sea. A cyclone’s diameter may range from 300 km to 600 km and derives its spinning motion from the *Coriolis Force* caused by the earth’s rotation. The duration of a cyclone may range from 7 to 10 days - its life cycle ends soon after landfall, because it is cut off from its moisture source. Cyclones are multi-hazard phenomena: winds, multiple storm waves, storm surge and inland flooding generated by heavy rainfall. Storm surges are cyclones accompanied by heavy rains and sea swells. During high tide, the storm surge is reinforced and can rise as high as 39.4 ft/12 m, washing over entire offshore islands and the coast. It is this wall of water that does most of the damage to life and property, especially in low flat terrain, high population density and poorly built houses. *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/C_0397.HTM accessed on 26 Nov. 2011.
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On October 22, 2010 Cyclone Giri lashed Arakan State along the Bay of Bengal in Western Burma (Myanmar), causing at least 259 deaths and leaving over 200,000 Arakanese people homeless. Furthermore, there was widespread damage to homes, paddy farms, fishing equipment and infrastructure.

Cyclone Giri: Two Years On

Voices from the Arakan State of Western Burma (Myanmar)

The first report of the Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO) - published on the second anniversary of Cyclone Giri - documents and highlights the situation in Arakan State before, during and after the cyclone. AHRDO wants to draw the Burmese government and international attention to the ongoing need for assistance to the affected Arakanese community, urging local and international media to highlight the continuing difficulties faced by the communities in Western Burma's Arakan State affected by the disaster.



www.arakanhrdo.org

info@arakanhrdo.org

Tel./ Fax: + 66 (0) 55 030 249

Mobile: + 66 (0) 816 736 326

P.O Box - 113, Mae Sot, Tak - 63110, Thailand

